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THE GODMOTHER

Marian Wright Edelman, The Clintons' Eminence Grise

By Mickey Kaus



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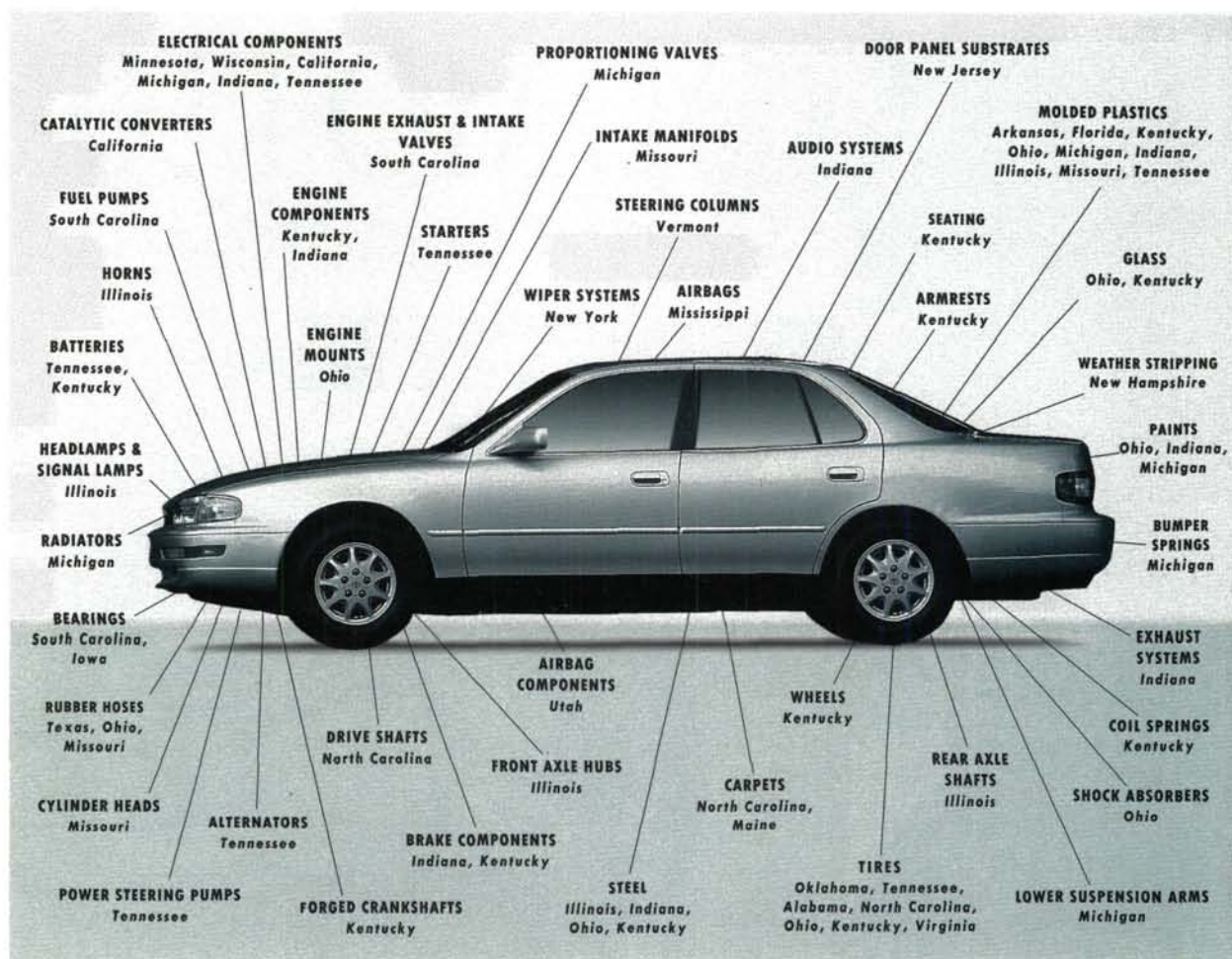
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CORRESPONDENCE

Original discontent

To the editors:

Jeffrey Rosen's article on Antonin Scalia ("The Leader of the Opposition," January 18) quite correctly points out the discrepancy between Scalia's stated methods of judicial decision-making and the actual conclusions he reaches. But there is a deeper flaw in Scalia's jurisprudence, and that is with his interpretive method itself. Even if Scalia were fully faithful to his preferred method of legal interpretation, the problem would not be solved, for the method itself is incoherent. The reasons for rejecting the originalist position are numerous: the impossibility of determining, with precision, what "intention" means, either the Founders' or Congress's; the difficulty in deciding just who the Framers were, and which should count; because of the abstract nature of the general principles set forth in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, we must interpret those documents in light of 200 years of cultural

change, transformations about which the Framers had no opinion (e.g., what were their intentions about phone taps as an "unreasonable search and seizure"?); and the fact that the Framers themselves rejected an originalist position. Indeed, save for a few Borkians (and of course Bork himself), the originalist position has largely been discredited, if not in conservative political circles then at least within academic legal thought.

That Scalia's actual decisions do not measure up to his stated philosophy may be, in a generous mood, ascribed to human fallibility. But that his jurisprudence is itself incoherent reveals a much more distressing aspect of the Court's most outspoken conservative: Scalia has nothing to be principled about because his principle of legal interpretation is, *de jure*, no principle at all.

CRIS KAYSER
Chicago, Illinois

To the editors:

Jeffrey Rosen criticizes Justice Scalia for lapsed originalism, or disingenuous statutory interpretation. Thus he concludes the justice is not true to his stated principles. But Rosen's problem is that he assails a straw man. Rosen postures as the scholastic, accusing Scalia of desert-

ing an unrelenting catechism of originalism or textualism. But in assailing Scalia the dogmatic adherent to originalism and textualism, he has missed the point of Scalia's jurisprudence. Scalia has never professed a rigid ideological adherence to originalism, or textualism. Rather, his use of both of these interpretive methods is qualified.

At its core, Scalia's is a jurisprudence of restraint, seeking to strike a proper balance of powers to maintain a representative democracy. He recognizes the temptation of a judiciary ruling without checks from the other branches—an elite acting as supra-legislators, supra-administrators and part-time moral and social philosophers. Thus his originalism and textualism must be analyzed not as ends in themselves, but as tools to serve this higher purpose of balancing and separating the federal powers.

Scalia's originalism is premised on the basis for judicial review described by *Marbury v. Madison*. *Marbury* depends on the notion that the Constitution is law with a fixed meaning that can be ascertained through traditional legal analysis. This fixed meaning is the quixotic quest of the originalist. Legal and historical analysis are his tools. This is not to say that originalism is perfect and yields a single, definite answer to constitutional questions; rather it narrows the realm of possible answers. Case in point is *Lee v. Weisman*, wherein David Souter and Scalia both engaged in originalist analysis but reached opposite results. The difference there was that while Souter generalized from history and abstracted a broad non-coercion principle, Scalia stuck to the specific tradition of allowing a benediction at high school graduation ceremonies. What originalism did in *Lee*, then, was define the playing field. Originalism establishes an external, historical criterion that the judge must adhere to. It thus restrains judges from exercising their own predilections. Consequently, the judiciary is moderated and kept from overreaching its station in the separation of powers scheme.

But originalism, while instilling judicial humility, does not go all the way to addressing judges' positivist instincts. This is why Scalia also insists upon a jurisprudence of rules. Stating law as rules, rather than as discretionary balancing tests or "reasonableness" standards, extends the notion that law has a fixed meaning. In turn, law as rules provides equal treatment by avoiding capricious results, enhances predictability and constrains judges in the future. As such, "law as rules" is closely related to the "plain meaning" textualism that Scalia presses on Congress. Through textualism, Scalia forces Congress to make law instead of, as it is wont to do,

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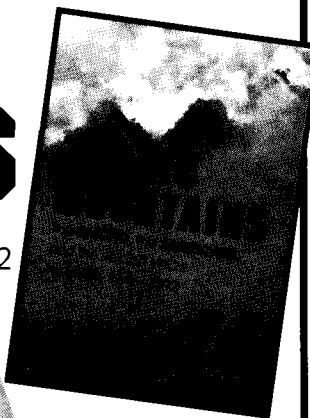
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express vaguely good ideas for the judiciary to institute. Though at times he may force a "plain meaning" on a term, through his interpretation Scalia puts Congress on notice that it must say explicitly what it means, and that its statutes must satisfy the *Marbury* definition of law having a fixed meaning. Textualism, then, is not a catechism of construction but rather a tool for keeping the balance and separation between the branches.

In a similar exercise of restraint *Lujan* demonstrates how Scalia reins in judicial overweening through the traditional constitutional doctrines of standing and redressability. Contrary to Rosen's assertion, *Lujan* was an originalist opinion, supported by tracing the "Case and Controversy" requirement to illustrate that professionally aggrieved groups cannot merely use the courts as the administrative agency of last resort.

Thus Justice Scalia's jurisprudence should not be understood or analyzed as an unrelenting attempt to apply originalism and textualism. These methods of interpretation are only tools in a broader enterprise in defining what law is, what judicial review can accomplish and what powers judges can exercise.

From my limited perspective, Antonin Scalia is the most principled, consistent jurist sitting on the Court today. Not since Justice Harlan have we had a justice with such integrity and such insight into the capability and role of the courts.

RAYMOND L. GIFFORD
Denver, Colorado

To the editors:

Jeffrey Rosen criticizes Antonia Scalia's objection to the state racial set aside programs involved in *Richmond v. Crosson* as inconsistent with the creation of the Freedman's Bureau by the Framers of the Fourteenth Amendment. Mysteriously, Rosen fails to explain why the Reconstruction Congress's view of its own powers, which the Fourteenth Amendment *augmented* with respect to racial affairs, is relevant to the Framers' view of the equal protection clause that, by its own terms, only applies to the states. Rosen's lapse is astonishing; Justice Scalia discussed this distinction between state and federal power in *Crosson* itself.

Contrary to Rosen's suggestion, Scalia's dissent in *Lee v. Weismann* [sic] contained evidence directly rebutting Madison's view that the Establishment Clause prohibits prayer at public ceremonies. For instance, the justice observed that the same Congress that wrote the Establishment Clause opened with a prayer offered by its chaplain. Madison may have disagreed with this

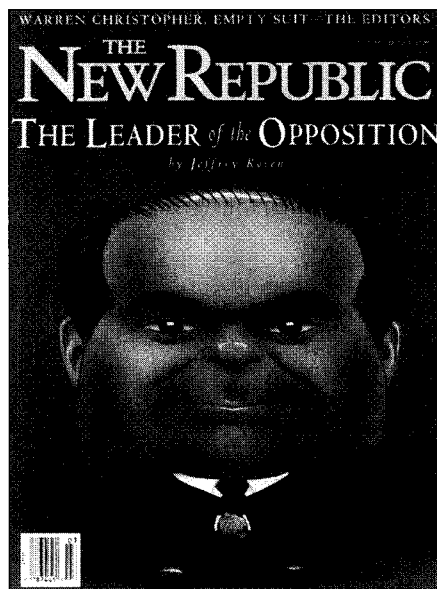
action; he also disagreed—again on constitutional grounds—when the same Congress chartered a National Bank. If Rosen really believes that Madison's views on these subjects are more probative of original meaning than the views of the First Congress, perhaps his next article could explain why Congress does not possess the power to charter Federal Reserve banks.

ALAN J. MEESE
Law clerk to Justice Scalia,
October 1990 term
Arlington, Virginia

B to Z

To the editors:

Reading Richard Blow's article on his generational fascination with compact



discs ("Discman," January 18), I thought of Neil Young's comment about C.D. technology: the mind is deceived, but the heart is sad. It is easy to dismiss that sentiment as overly melodramatic and dulled by nostalgia, but there is a simple observation that Young and many others have made about C.D.s (see Edward Rothstein's brilliant caveat, "The Quest for Perfect Sound," *TNR*, December 30, 1985): there are a lot of C.D.s that sound bad *because* they use digital technology and *because* they are C.D.s.

There are many recordings that have never made the successful transition from analogue to digital and that somewhat mysteriously sound best on the technology of their era. The other day I heard a Hank Williams record on an ancient portable phonograph. It's not clear to me why it sounded better than any Hank Williams C.D. I've heard or why the lap steel guitar sounded more musical (I suspect it has something to do with

the vacuum tubes). But what that ancient turntable illustrated was that C.D.s, like stereophonic sound or any new advancement in audio technology, have their own disadvantages. Beach Boys records, for example, sound much better in mono than stereo for the simple reason that Brian Wilson is 50 percent deaf in one ear. He is calibrated for mono, and any stereo mix is going to be someone else's guess at what the Beach Boys are supposed to sound like.

My great hope is that Richard Blow and others in his generation will find themselves in a junk store for curiosity or whatever other reason. They will be strangely compelled to purchase a record player and a stack of 45s, and they will be utterly surprised at the music contained in this ancient technology.

KEN TAKATA
Oak Park, Illinois

To the editors:

Richard Blow's article "Discman" caused my anal-retentive streak to surface. Either his compact disc collection exists entirely of artists whose names begin with the letter A and B, or he doesn't read his liner notes very carefully. My only Buckwheat Zydeco C.D. is tucked alphabetically between Lindsey Buckingham and Buffalo Tom. The "Louisiana accordionist" whom Blow confuses with the band's name is actually Stanley Dural Jr., a fixture on the Cajun music circuit for years. I hope Dwight Yoakam won't get too lonely when Blow reorganizes his collection. There's always a Warren Zevon disc or two to keep him company.

DOUGLAS L. LANDRY
Newton, Massachusetts

Clunk

To the editors:

In the *Washington Diarist* ("Troops," January 18), Stephen Rodrick comments that "Remembrance of Things Past" has "pretentious clunkiness" (as translation of the title of Proust's masterpiece). I find the term amazingly inapt for a phrase in Shakespeare's Sonnet No. 30, one of the highest points in English literature. I suggest that Rodrick read the sonnet and see whether he wishes to revise his opinion.

WILFRED KAPLAN
Ann Arbor, Michigan

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FROM WASHINGTON

Thinking of Hillary

I've only interviewed Hillary Rodham Clinton once. I was part of a group of reporters who had scheduled a question-and-answer session with the governor of Arkansas at the 1988 Democratic convention. Both Clintons showed up. Several times, when we asked the governor a question, his wife would answer. She'd say something like, "I think that's my area," and butt right in, before he said a word.

I'm sorry, I thought this was rude. Perhaps I was wrong. I now know from *Time* (among other publications) that the Clintons are an "enduring partnership between two equals," and that negative reactions to Hillary are a sign of male "backlash"—that, as Hillary's husband said during the campaign, to attack her is to engage in "an attack on women who are independent, strong-minded and who work for a living." Nobody wants to do *that*. I've also read enough of H.R. Clinton's writings on children's rights to know that she doesn't equate the family with slavery, and doesn't think kids should be able to sue their parents rather than help with the dishes.

But are there really no legitimate grounds for distress with the signs of creeping Rodhamism—actually it's more like leaping Rodhamism—now so evident in the White House? I think there are. HRC may prove to be a stunningly successful executive (and if that happens, Al Gore shouldn't count on being unopposed for the Democratic nomination in the year 2000). Right now, though, our new First Lady triggers several sorts of justifiable doubt, even—perhaps especially—among Democrats. Here's my list:

1. *She's a false feminist.* It's one thing for a woman to be independent, be strong-minded and work for a living. But, as Karen Lehrman pointed out in *The New York Times* last summer, Mrs. Clinton has not chosen to be independent. She has hitched herself firmly to her husband's career and used his success to promote herself. Nepotism is not feminism. And there has been something arrogant

about her determination to have it both ways, benefiting from her association with her husband while demanding all the benefits of independence as well. "For goodness' sake, you can't be a lawyer if you don't represent banks," she famously said, responding to the charge that she represented one such institution before a commissioner appointed by her spouse. There are, of course, many lawyers who don't represent banks. There are even many Americans who aren't lawyers at all. If Hillary really were "independent"—if she were, say, an architect, or even if she practiced family law as a solo practitioner—she would be a relatively uncontroversial figure.

2. *She can't be fired.* Well before Hillary was formally put in charge of health care reform, there were reports that she was micromanaging parts of the government as obscure as the Resolution Trust Corporation, the federal agency stuck with the property of failed S&Ls. (Hillary let it be known she wants more of this property sold to low-income people.) Faced with this unprecedented influence, Hillary's defenders say, so what? "A spouse's ability to help is not a legal power, but a matter of suasion," writes Garry Williams in *The New York Review of Books*. Hillary gave this argument a feminist-sounding twist, noting that "if you look at George Bush, he's advised by a coterie of men.... No one gives George Bush a hard time when he gets advice from James Baker."

But if Bush didn't like the advice Baker was giving him, he could sack him. Hillary has a rather more secure tenure. She also has something else. Wills writes that "no husband has been browbeaten in [the presidency] to do what he did not want to do." But no husband has been through the campaign the Clintons have just been through, replete with televised charges of philandering and the candidate's admission of "wrongdoing." Hillary presumably knows a lot about what the wrongdoing entailed. Yet she did her part, and saved the election. All this gives her—how to put it delicately—unusual leverage for a presidential adviser, even for a First Lady.

Again, what's wrong with that? There isn't any question here of democratic accountability. The Clintons will be held accountable by voters in 1996 for whatever they cook up between themselves. But there is a potential for mixed signals, even ongoing deadlock, that should disturb all those who wish the president well. There is also a question of honesty. Much of the Clinton campaign was spent giving the false impression that Hillary would not play such a crucial policymaking role. Meanwhile, her sudden postelection assertiveness, her name change, even her headband's return only

add to the sense that she is cashing in on some sort of I-stood-by-you-now-it's-my-turn deal. (During the campaign Hillary said she had dropped her maiden name in the early '80s because "I just decided that it was not an issue that was that big to me." It got bigger, apparently.)

3. *She's a paleoliberal.* Bill Clinton campaigned and was elected as a "different kind of Democrat." Hillary Clinton, it's clear, is not a different kind of Democrat—or if she is, she's a different different kind than he is. The most significant bit of neoliberalism in her past—her support of teacher competency tests despite the opposition of the teachers' unions—seems less significant when you learn that the tests were not among the recommendations of the task force she chaired. (They were added later by her husband.)

Of course, I happen to agree more with Bill than with Hillary, for reasons elaborated elsewhere in this issue (see "The Godmother," page 21). I admit I would be less upset at the prospect of spousal disagreements in the White House if Bill Clinton were married to, say, Elaine Kamarck of the Democratic Leadership Council. But again, the issue isn't just ideology. It's false advertising. The voters aren't getting what they thought they were getting.

Or, rather, what most of them thought they were getting. During the campaign, Bill Clinton presumably gained support among those who suspected Hillary shared their views and would have influence. Yet when opponents attacked Hillary for these views, for her actions or for her influence, they were dismissed as being either sexist or ungentlemanly ("You ought to be ashamed of yourself for jumping on my wife," Clinton scolded Jerry Brown). Nice trick if you can pull it off.

4. *She rarely says anything interesting.* One reason it's difficult to criticize Hillary is that her views are largely unknown in any detail. She is frequently hailed as presidential timber for delivering speeches that would get a real candidate pilloried for contentlessness. Sample: "We need to forge a new consensus about [our] new political direction that doesn't jerk us to the right, jerk us to the left ... but instead moves us forward together." (Applause.) Even Bush usually said more than that.

Again, these doubts may evaporate. Joe Klein of *Newsweek* reports that Hillary's positions are "as nuanced as her husband's, and not nearly the left-wing idiocy caricatured by some commentators." It would be encouraging, though, to see some of these nuances. As Pat Buchanan said: "Speak for yourself, Hillary."

MICKEY KAUS

FEBRUARY 15, 1993

ARMS AND THE MEN

"We know we have a certain number of gays performing extremely well, but they're in the closet, and as long as they stay there, we're fine. But when they come out of the closet and get pro-active, it'll be really nasty."

—an anonymous Navy admiral to *The New York Times*, January 23

The latest resistance to letting lesbians and gay men openly serve their country has at least forced the real grounds of the opposition into the open. The argument is no longer that gay men and women pose a security threat, since open homosexuals are immune to blackmail; it is no longer that they cannot perform their jobs as well as heterosexuals, since even the military now concedes this is untrue; it is not even that they are likely to engage in conduct that will disrupt military efficiency, since that alleged problem can be resolved by strict rules of conduct. It is that the simple *acknowledgment* of homosexuals in the military is crippling to military effectiveness and morale. Military leaders have thus performed the service of reducing their case to a single, stark argument: that the closet is an essential part of the military's capability; that acquiescing in prejudice is inseparable from the act of defending the country; that what is objectionable about gay men and women is not what they do, but who they *are*.

The way in which many members of Congress and even the secretary of defense have placidly engaged the logic of this argument is testament to how deep fear of homosexuals runs in our culture and how publicly acceptable prejudice against them still is. Such arguments about the fitness of homosexuals to serve

their country, with no reference to conduct, could not conceivably be made about any other social group. For more than 100 years, with the shameful exception of Japanese-Americans at the start of World War II, no race has actually been excluded from military service; blacks were integrated three decades ago; women, having served since the Revolutionary War, were given greater opportunities in 1972. Lesbians and gay men suffer a unique indignity: for generations, they have already fought and many have died for their country and even now they are required to justify the mere fact of their existence.

Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, strenuously objects to the equation of what he calls a "benign" characteristic such as skin color or gender with an individual's sexuality, since the latter, he asserts, is a function of behavior rather than identity. But he is wrong. Gay sexual orientation, like straight sexual orientation, is constitutive of someone's deepest personal identity and, in the opinion of the vast majority of psychologists and even of the Roman Catholic Church, essentially unalterable. It is not identifiable with any single behavior, but, like heterosexuality, ranges the full gamut of human experience, from the most irenic of spiritual bonds to the most compulsive of physical acts. Powell is an educated and civilized man; he must know this. If he believes what he says he believes, he is either being disingenuous or he is cynically peddling bigotry.

In a free society, of course, some will argue that the physical expression of homosexual identity is morally



repugnant; and they may hold this belief sincerely. But in the case of homosexuals serving openly in the military, it is an irrelevance. No one is urging the approval or promotion of homosexual acts among military personnel; all that is at stake is that homosexuals, if they so wish, should be able to disclose their sexuality without fear of direct retribution. This minimal level of toleration implies no approval of any activity, merely acquiescence in the free existence of the other.

There is a point at which this subject, of course, becomes inseparable from deep, irrational emotions. These cannot be argued against, but they have to be confronted. It says something important about the real roots of the opposition that, according to the latest ABC News poll, 57 percent of men support the ban, while 57 percent of women oppose it.

At the root of the military's objection, we suspect, is the worry that the very existence of openly gay soldiers—especially the good ones—threatens the pattern of heterosexual machismo on which an integral part of military self-esteem clearly rests. This threat is uniquely powerful. Unlike women and black Americans, homosexuals are difficult to exclude psychologically from the core of the military's identity. Women can be given separate accommodations; blacks can be more subtly set apart in the barracks or dining rooms. But a newly open homosexual may turn out to be a best friend, or a commander. He cannot so easily be dismissed. This fear, however, is not an argument, it is a defense mechanism; and it can be overcome. Homosexual courage need not threaten its heterosexual counterpart. And besides, when an executive order is signed, the closet is not going to collapse overnight. Gay people who have spent years hiding their identity and playing by the rules are unlikely to change their patterns of behavior immediately. In their effort to prove their professional ability, they are more likely than ever to place the strictest boundaries between their professional and private lives.

But at some level, the panic also stems not from fear of the other but from fear of the self. It's widely accepted that the most virulent homophobes are often those troubled by their own sexuality; that gay-bashers can frequently turn out to be gay themselves. The military is not a homosexual organization, but it is probably more so than most of our public institutions. At its core is the close association of groups of young people of the same sex, trained to work and live together in circumstances that require high levels of intimacy, inculcated with an ethic of almost idealized masculinity. Its operations involve a range of activities—from same-sex bonding to communal physical activities—that have an inevitably homoerotic undercurrent and have always tended disproportionately to attract homosexuals and lesbians. The virulence with which the military disavows homosexuality is surely related to its recognition of this truth. If this matter were simply about admitting homosexuals into the military, it would be more easily resolved. But, in fact, it is about part of the military

coming out to itself, which is a far more terrifying experience, and one which cannot be put off for much longer. There is also, of course, the legitimate worry that personal relations between men or between women may indeed disrupt the need for communal identity and rigid discipline. But discipline can be preserved—among gays and straights—by strict rules of conduct that do not base themselves in crude homophobia; and it will have more credibility if it is.

We believe in any case that the civil argument about gays in the military should rest on something other than emotion. It is about more than a simple campaign promise or a special interest group's demand or even the difficult question of the military's morale. It has developed into a very clear case of whether the heart of our government should single out a particular group for discrimination, based on nothing but an involuntary orientation. The president, we believe, understands that this is the central and overwhelming question. The Constitution guarantees to all persons the equal protection of the laws; and the struggle to secure equal rights for homosexuals is as urgent today as the struggle to secure equal rights for blacks was forty years ago. As the late Thurgood Marshall told the Supreme Court in his argument against segregated schools, "Equal means getting the same thing, at the same time, and in the same place." Serving one's country is not a "special right"; it is constitutive of equal citizenship. We are confident that those who are fighting to prolong the ban on gays in the military will be judged as harshly by history as those who sought to desegregate schools "with all deliberate speed."

So far, Clinton has courageously shown that he grasps the moral essence of his position and has the tenacity to stick with it. What he needs to do now—and swiftly—is to articulate more powerfully the reasons for his stand, to speak eloquently about the broader issue at stake, to relate this battle to the battles of the past. There are those who counsel that he should not waste his political capital on the matter. They could not be more wrong. Bill Clinton was elected in part because of his conviction that an integrated America was possible, that those who played by the rules, regardless of their identity, deserved a fair shake at the opportunity that this country offers. He spoke of black concerns to white Americans and vice versa; he made the case against a balkanized America, and for a country where our differences are occasions for convergence rather than division; and he memorably added the hopes of gay and lesbian Americans to this vision. There are many in straight and gay America—from bigoted religious fundamentalists to embittered queer extremists—who believe that this kind of integration is impossible, that the civil interaction of homosexuals and heterosexuals in our society is a doomed venture. We hope and we believe that these cynics are wrong. Our new president now has a historic chance to prove it. •

NOTEBOOK

STAYING THERE: "My fellow citizens, today we celebrate the mystery of American renewal. This ceremony is held in the depth of winter, but by the words we speak and the faces we show the world, we force the spring."
—Bill Clinton, inaugural address, January 20

"Growth has its season. First comes spring and summer. But then we have fall and winter. And then we get spring and summer again." —Chauncey Gardner, from the movie *Being There*

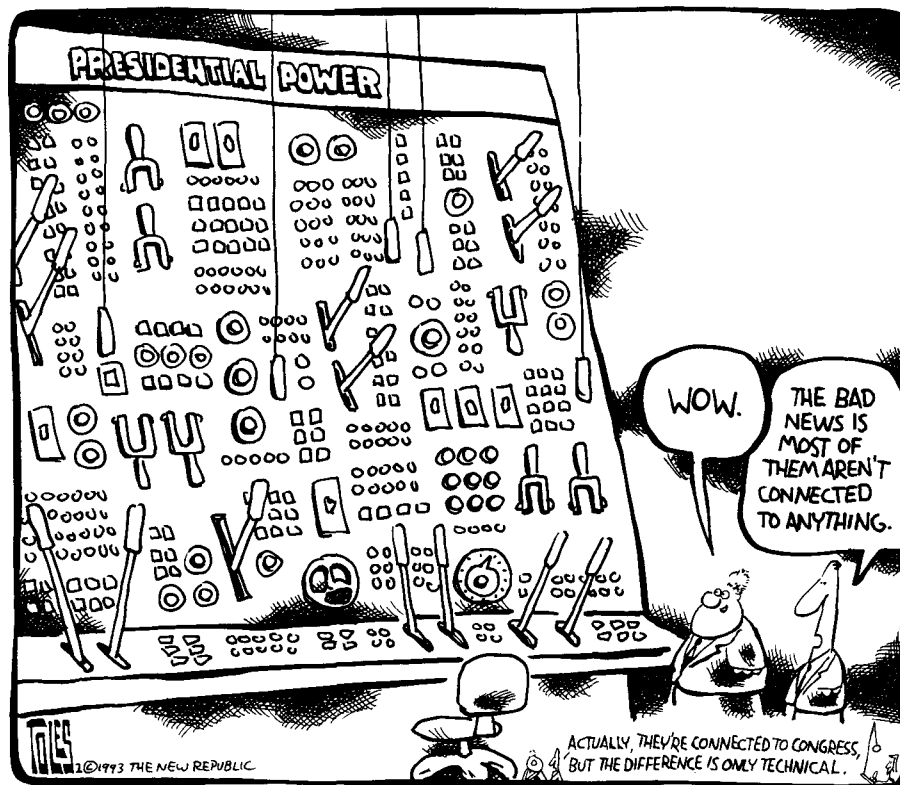
SANCTIONS FOR BRUTALITY: President Clinton's foreign policy apparatus is staffed largely with people who believed two years ago that Saddam Hussein's Iraq could be dislodged from Kuwait through economic sanctions. News from Iraq, reported by Paul Lewis in *The New York Times* last weekend, should finally discredit those arguments. Despite all the interdicts on trade to Iraq, Baghdad still defies U.N. regulations against its terrorizing Kurds and Shiites, openly taunts the new president by firing search radar and anti-aircraft artillery at U.S. Navy jets in the southern zone and has been able to rebuild almost all the 134 bridges, hundreds of miles of roads and railway tracks, electric grids and communication networks destroyed in the war. But Iraq's most awful and awesome achievement is the creation during the last year of the Third River, a canal that will wash the salt from 3.5 million acres of saline land and make them arable. What motivated this feat was not agriculture but atrocity against both subjects and the environment. The marshlands are home to millions of Shiites whom Saddam wants to flush out into the open and murder or drive into exile, as he did to hundreds of thousands of Kurds. This is an object lesson for the Clintonites: once begun, wars ought to be finished, sometimes to unconditional surrender. Sanctions—even with war—rarely, if ever, work.

MARSHALL'S PLAN: As the architect of the legal strategy that ended official segregation in America, Thurgood Marshall was, in life, a figure of history. He led the struggle to secure for blacks the equal rights that they had been guaranteed at Reconstruction but were denied for a century after, using the courts to provide what the political system had obstructed. We were less enamored of his performance on the Supreme Court, where he was often guided more by sensitivity to injustice than by the text and history of the Constitution. But as an advocate, Marshall's radical, colorblind vision of justice was a towering vision; and one that

seems lamentably evanescent today.

DETOUR: The first foreign visit of Secretary of State Warren Christopher will be to Israel. The purpose: to press the Rabin government to take back the 400-odd Muslim extremists and terrorists it deported from the disputed territories late in 1992. (While Christopher is in the region, he might check in with the Algerians, who have quar-

antined 9,000 Islamic fundamentalists deep in the North African desert, far away from their homes—and from CNN cameras, too.) What provoked the idea? Presumably the hope to save the peace process, which the Palestinian delegates are now boycotting. But the Palestinians need the talks more than the Israelis do. And a trip such as this so soon will signal that this administration is as obsessed with the Arab-Israeli conflict as was its Bush-Baker (and Carter) predecessors. It shouldn't be. American interests are not directly affected by what happens in Nablus and Hebron. Moreover, the Muslim orbit is full of places—Iraq, Iran, Bosnia—where the stakes are truly enormous. There are tens of thousands of Muslims, who have committed no crimes, incarcerated in 135 Serbian detention camps. These are the places that need urgent attention. But it's an old State Department gambit: if you're clueless about how to deal with the world, you can always deal with Israel. •



CROSS-BUYING

By Michael Lewis

When I say that the only goods I truly enjoy buying are women's clothes, you'll have to take it on faith that I'm not the least bit inclined to wear them myself. I begrudge no man his closets hung with gowns and chemises, but I have none of my own. In my few years of browsing for dresses and blouses I have never seriously doubted that my own sexual impulses are full speed straight ahead, although I have sometimes wondered wistfully whether a bit of sexual ambiguity might not be a literary plus, like an unhappy childhood or a powerful agent. My fondness for buying women's clothing is nothing more than a fondness for—and curiosity about—women themselves.

The most obvious and crude of the many delights of a women's clothing store is the ease with which the most witless male can scandalize his female friends by simply describing what he sees. Fancy women's clothing departments are the only places in America where Japanese standards of courtesy and honesty are rigorously maintained. A woman will don a ball gown that makes her look like a mobile home and her best female friend—present, in theory, to offer a straightforward appraisal and save her from herself—will say, "That's almost as pretty as the green one you had on" or, if she's really disagreeable, "The green one was a little more flattering to your figure," but never, "They're going to have to paste a Wide Load sign onto the back before you can wear it on the sidewalk," which is the sort of thing that passes for fair comment in the men's clothing department.

The etiquette of the women's clothing scene thus makes it perfectly possible for anyone with low, juvenile instincts to play at being Oscar Wilde for an afternoon, exploding word bombs and sending people diving for cover. A couple of days before the Inauguration I went shopping with a friend of mine for her ball gown. (Shopping for ball gowns is the women's clothing equivalent of the high stakes table at Vegas.) While she changed in the dressing rooms I was investigated by both saleswomen and female customers, who adopted the usual pretense that no man in the history of the universe had ever set foot inside a women's clothing store. "She's so lucky to have a boyfriend who'll go shopping with her," said one. The lucky lady then emerged, wearing a short and starchy aquamarine gown

with rushing on the bodice and crinolines beneath the skirt. "You look so cute!" said the salesperson. "It really suits your shape," said a fellow customer. "You look," I said, "like the woman who placed third in the dance competition at the end of *Saturday Night Fever*," which was true. "That's an awful thing to say!" shrieked all the women at once. "You look," I said, trying to prevent a disaster, "like a peeled banana." "Howwwwawfullll!" hollered the women.

Walking through a women's clothing department I feel the same sense of wonder as when the dessert tray emerges at a four-star restaurant. The sheer range of human wants! Men who take no interest in what women wear will never know how various dressing can be: the infinitely small gradations in color and material; the picturesque names of articles of clothing; the graceful poses that a woman strikes in her ritual dance of self-admiration before the full-length mirror—the quick spin, the flat hand on stomach sideways turn, the 1950s yearbook picture flounce, as she strains to see what impression she will make from the rear.

But there is nothing to beat the vaguely illicit thrill of snooping around backstage before the show. Probably the main appeal of cross-buying is that it falls somewhere between outright taboo and simple convention. Some men still grow a little uneasy when you tell them that you like to buy dresses. Others relax and say, "You too! I thought I was the only one." (A moment of discovery paralleled in gay literature, when the young homosexual protagonist first learns that he is not alone in the world.) Women are more likely to suspect that what a cross-buying man really enjoys is keeping women in their place by reminding them that they must decorate themselves to please him.

The thought that women are going to all their trouble for men, true though it may sadly be, usually doesn't enter into my enjoyment of women's clothing. I suppose it is at once flattering (they are putting on all these wonderful disguises for me!) and insulting (they think I am so easily duped!). When they are shopping together women do not formally acknowledge that they wish to please men, even when they do. They like to believe that men are philistines who can't tell mauve from purple; and of course they are usually right. A lot of salespeople tell variations on the basic story of the woman who arrives dragging a reluctant husband behind her and then proceeds to try on outfits until she hits on one of which he completely disapproves, which she buys.

It required only about ten minutes of my poking around the ball gowns and pretending to be Oscar Wilde before a saleswoman flashed me a look both sage and contemptuous and said, "Women don't dress for men, you know. They dress for other women." With that her customer turned sideways to the mirror and, overlooking the friend she had brought along for advice, asked me, "So what do you think? Do you think my boyfriend Don will like this?" I did. •



MAJOR DUD

By Fred Barnes

The scheme for lifting the ban on gays in the military—without critically damaging Bill Clinton's embryonic presidency—was spelled out for Clinton on January 17, the day he arrived in Washington. Clinton, Vice President Al Gore, Secretary of State Warren Christopher, national security adviser Anthony Lake and White House aides Bruce Lindsay and George Stephanopoulos assembled in Blair House. They would hear General Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, voice stern opposition to removing the ban ("the presence of homosexuals in the military is prejudicial to good order and discipline"). But Les Aspin, the new defense secretary, briefed Clinton and his advisers first. He had a warning and a strategy.

The warning: Clinton was already in deep trouble on the gay issue. If he took the "stroke of the pen" approach, immediately ending the ban on gays in the armed forces, Congress would probably overturn his action. Not only would Clinton suffer an embarrassing defeat at the hands of a Democratic Congress, he'd fail to implement his campaign pledge to lift the ban. The Aspin strategy: renew the pledge, but allow six months' "breathing room" to mollify the Pentagon brass and Congress before issuing the executive order. Clinton bought the idea, as Aspin expected he would. A few days before, Aspin had run the proposed strategy by Lake and Stephanopoulos, among others. They liked it.

By adopting the Aspin strategy, Clinton may have made the best of a bad situation. But there is more trouble ahead, lots more. Clinton is loathed inside the military, by officers young and old, more than any president in modern times. Other Democratic presidents had military ties—Kennedy and Johnson served in World War II, Carter was an Annapolis grad—while Clinton evaded the draft, led protests against the war in Vietnam and wants to slash military spending. The officers I've talked to believe Clinton doesn't understand the military because he never served. If he had, he wouldn't be moving early in his presidency to kill the ban on gays, says Republican Senator John McCain of Arizona, a career naval officer and Vietnam POW.

Many in the military and Congress thought Clinton was persuadable on the issue and might merely order a study. Sam Nunn, the Democratic chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, says Clinton should wait for congressional hearings, "and probably even

have a presidential commission that would deliberate on this matter." McCain notes that the president held a summit to examine economic issues and set up a task force to develop a health care program. "But when it comes to lifting the ban on gays in the military, we hear from Barney Frank, who must be his spokesman, that it's going to be done, period. He [Clinton] has an incredible lack of understanding of the depth of this issue." Frank is a Democratic House member from Massachusetts, and gay.

In fact, Clinton didn't leave himself much wiggle room. Since September 1991, when he told Frank the ban was a bad idea, Clinton has been unequivocal on the issue. David Mixner, a prominent Democrat in Los Angeles and gay political consultant, says that Clinton, without prodding, pledged to end the ban at a meeting of gay and lesbian leaders in L.A. in October 1991. In January 1992 Clinton told the Human Rights Campaign Fund: "I believe patriotic Americans should have the right to serve the country as a member of the armed forces without regard to sexual or affectational orientation." And finally, in *Putting People First*, the Clinton-Gore campaign tract issued last September, the president promised (on page 64) to "issue executive orders to repeal the ban on gays and lesbians from military or foreign service."

The Clinton transition assigned a Washington lawyer, John Holum, to devise a plan for removing the ban. He proposed to finesse the executive order. Instead, the president would simply order his defense secretary to drop the ban and halt efforts to expel homosexuals currently in the military. The plan drew criticism on two counts. Gays, a voting bloc Clinton had courted and won, were outraged. "It's important to have the full force of the presidency behind" ending the ban, says Mixner. Without an executive order, "it wouldn't work." He telephoned Stephanopoulos and David Wilhelm, the new Democratic national chairman, to lobby against the Holum plan. "I was told not to worry."

Aspin was already on the case. He was concerned the ban would be ended immediately and that the Holum approach would lead to reversal in Congress. In a January 14 memo to Aspin, aides Rudy de Leon and Jeff Smith claimed that "early legislative action on this issue will be detrimental for three reasons. It will be detrimental to the president's long-term relations with Congress, his relationship with the military as commander in chief and may hinder the intended policy change of ending discrimination against homosexuals."

Aspin's alternative was the two-step approach, outlined at Blair House, then amplified in a January 18 memo to Clinton. The president, in a memorandum to the secretary of defense, would give Aspin six months to draft an executive order killing the ban. Then, in July, Clinton would sign the order. In the meantime, Aspin would consult military leaders on a strict new code of military conduct. "The idea is to prevent inflammatory behavior," says an Aspin aide, things like

romantic involvement between members of the same military unit. While the Pentagon reviewed the matter, Congress would be asked to hold off any vote.

In his memo to Clinton, Aspin admitted his strategy doesn't guarantee success. "The gamble is that after consultation with the military, and working with the Congress, a compromise can be worked out," he wrote. "We've got to come up with something that is broadly acceptable to everybody," Aspin added on January 24 on "Face the Nation." If the military balks, so will Congress. What's the military's incentive to compromise? "Within the next few years, they're going to wake up and find that the courts have ordered them to do this, and then they'll be doing it under some kind of court mandate without having a chance to control it at all," Aspin said.

Democrats may be willing to delay congressional action, but Republicans aren't. The GOP point man, Senator Dan Coats of Indiana, says "there's no reason to wait six months." He'll push for legislation codifying the ban soon. Chances for passage are helped by a public outcry that exceeded the protest of Zoe Baird's abortive nomination as attorney general and aroused Congress. According to Aspin, the key to blocking Republican efforts "is the active leadership of Senator Nunn." Early signs from Nunn are that he won't help. Aspin invited the senator to breakfast at the Pentagon on January 22, but little was achieved. Nunn is not on good terms with gays. He was offended by a gay "kiss-in" at his Senate office after he renewed his opposition to lifting the ban. And he believes that opposition by gay leaders ruined his chances of becoming Clinton's secretary of state.

If Aspin doesn't forge a compromise, Clinton will find himself with no easy way out. Should he back off lifting the ban, gays will be furious. And, Mixner argues, people will ask, "Who's the commander in chief?" Should he push ahead, he faces conflict with the Pentagon and possible defeat in Congress. Either way, Clinton's desire to please everyone will be thwarted. Welcome to Washington. •

Race, immigration and nannies.

GOOD HELP

By Jeffrey Rosen

The angry populism that forced Zoe Baird to withdraw her nomination as attorney general was expressed as a syllogism. She had broken "the law" (which law, no one was precisely sure); therefore she was not fit to lead the

Department of Justice. Taking their cue from their constituents, the senators who demanded Baird's repentance were equally legalistic. "To me this is a big deal, personally," said Senator Joseph Biden, "and I suspect it is to a lot of Americans." "A technical or theoretical violation?" asked Senator Alan Simpson, incredulously. "Well, if that's true, then we should do something."

The sanctimony is absurd. In 1986, when Simpson co-sponsored the immigration law that Baird broke, he made it clear that he never expected it to be enforced against people who hired undocumented housekeepers. And many of the civil rights leaders who denounced Baird had been lobbying Congress to repeal the provisions she violated. The unacknowledged subtext of the Baird hearings concerns race, not law, and it threatens to confuse the debate about immigration policy in the next decade.

Most of the public criticism of Baird focused on the fact that she had failed to pay her share of Social Security and employment taxes for a Peruvian couple she employed. (Her lawyer mistakenly told her that it is not possible to start a Social Security account for aliens.) But the more important law that Baird broke was the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, which made it illegal to hire aliens in the first place. Named after its sponsors, the Simpson-Mazzoli act was the most dramatic change in U.S. immigration policy in thirty-five years. Before 1986 it had been illegal for undocumented aliens to work in the United States, but not illegal for employers to hire them. By threatening to impose tough fines on employers who "knowingly" hire undocumented workers, Congress promised to "regain control of American borders." But by making it clear that the penalties were not intended to be vigorously enforced, it managed to keep the borders relatively open at a time of increasing popular pressure to restrict them.

When the law was first proposed, according to Charles Gordon, then general counsel of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, there was "an explosion of indignation" in Congress at the idea that the government would be put in the business of "going after housewives." Gordon says he assured the House immigration subcommittee that "we don't intend it to apply to housewives." In the course of the debate, Congress rejected a "Beverly Hills amendment," which would have exempted all households with three or fewer domestic servants. (The exemption was considered unfair to small businesses.) Instead, Congress carved out a more modest exception for "casual hires," which the INS defines as those who "provide domestic service in a private home that is sporadic, irregular or intermittent."

If Baird had hired the Peruvians as once-a-month housekeepers, in other words, she would not have violated the immigration laws after all. Live-in nannies, on the other hand, are covered. But in deference to Congress's intentions, Alan Nelson, commissioner of

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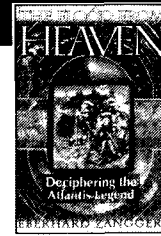
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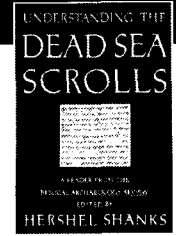
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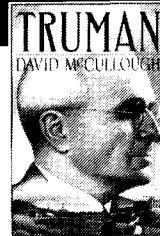
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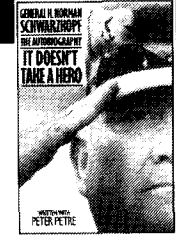
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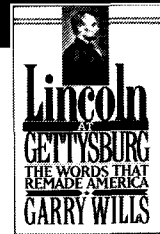
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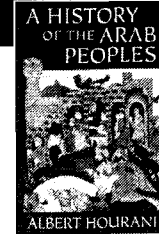
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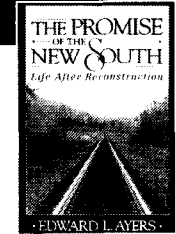
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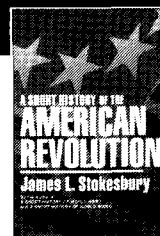
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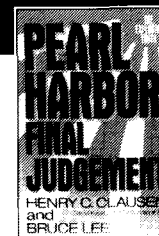
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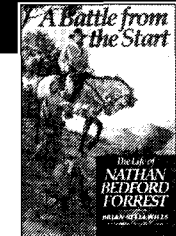
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the INS, issued a 1987 directive saying that the INS would not target private households, focusing its enforcement efforts on firms instead. The Labor Department also decided to wink at the nannies: when employers file for green cards, as Baird did for her employees, the Labor Department almost never passes the information on to the INS. In short, when Baird's lawyer told her "that the processes set up by the Labor Department and the INS gave tacit approval to this sort of situation," he was accurately stating government policy.

Of course, the fact that Baird knew she would never be prosecuted for breaking the immigration law doesn't excuse the fact that she broke it. An attorney general should be a legal formalist, not a legal realist. But it makes the self-righteousness of senators like Simpson particularly ludicrous.

Furthermore, by focusing on legalisms, the senators managed to avoid the racial subtext of the popular backlash against Baird: the fact that many blacks and Hispanics fear losing jobs to undocumented aliens. A 1983 poll found that 69 percent of blacks and 56 percent of Hispanics said that immigration is a "major problem" because aliens "take away jobs that citizens might take." A 1990 survey of Hispanics found majorities as high as 80 percent insisting that there was "too much immigration" because they fear economic competition from more recent immigrants. It is no coincidence that the first public figures to call for Baird's withdrawal were black civil rights leaders like Barbara Jordan, who argued that Baird should be punished for violating a law that other working women, with far fewer means and less education, obey. Implicit in the criticism was resentment of Baird for hiring undocumented Hispanics rather than African Americans. "Descended from people who once did domestic work," Patricia King of Georgetown Law School wrote obliquely in *The Washington Post*, "I know that payment of Social Security taxes is essential for people with that kind of meager income to ward off destitution in old age."

Before the Baird hearings, however, most black and Hispanic leaders had taken a very different position on tough immigration enforcement. The NAACP and the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund recently urged Congress to repeal the law that Baird violated, in light of (hotly disputed) evidence that it has increased discrimination against job applicants who look foreign. Bowing to the NAACP's concerns, Senators Edward Kennedy and Orrin Hatch recently introduced a bill to repeal the heart of Simpson-Mazzoli.

In light of the Baird hearings, it will be harder for civil rights leaders to press their argument that fear of sanctions leads employers to discriminate against people who look like undocumented Hispanics. For in the nanny market, at least, the undocumented Hispanics are clearly preferred. Jacqueline Hagan of the University of Houston, an authority on the sociology

of nannies, conducted a recent study for the Department of Labor about the effects of the Simpson-Mazzoli law on live-in housekeepers in Houston. Hagan found that undocumented Hispanics are seen as "more passive, more loyal and less hostile" than Mexicans and African Americans. "The women I interviewed would many times say, 'We prefer having a Guatemalan or a Salvadoran or a Peruvian to a Mexican-American or an African American.' They're less trouble.... Employers have all sorts of stereotypes. Mexicans drink and have their boyfriends over. Blacks steal."

Here is a representative employer quoted in Hagan's study:

I've had many girls clean my house, both Salvadoran and Mexican.... Anna, my Guatemalan, is more responsible with my child.... Mexicans are always on the phone. They have guys over when you're out of the house and eat things without asking.... Guatemalans are ... more loyal, and they don't show their temper. They just make better workers.

It would be unfair to assume that Baird shared these crude attitudes. But her inability to find an "appropriate" nanny among the New Haven residents who answered her newspaper ad raises troubling questions about race and class in a mostly black city. The euphemism conceals all sorts of painful reasons why many white baby boomers are uncomfortable hiring blacks to care for their children: from persistent stereotypes to queasiness about being served by blacks in the shadow of Jim Crow. (The ambivalence goes both ways: Hagan reports that African Americans are increasingly unwilling to do live-in domestic work at the going rate for undocumented workers.)

Nevertheless, Baird's efforts to apply for a green card on her nanny's behalf look scrupulous in comparison to many employers. According to Hagan's study, many couples are so afraid of being forced to pay Social Security penalties that they are reluctant to sponsor their nannies for citizenship at all. "In one case in River Oaks," Hagan recalls, "where there's mansion after mansion, this poor woman was going from door to door, asking the neighbors to certify that they'd seen her on the street, because her employer's husband was a lawyer and was afraid of the tax penalties if he acknowledged her. It's a catch-22."

This, then, is one of the perverse effects of Simpson-Mazzoli: because undocumented women are more likely than men to find household jobs that the INS has decided not to target, the flow of women aliens has increased dramatically since 1988. At the same time, because many employers refuse to acknowledge their nannies for fear of tax penalties, the nannies are unable to take advantage of the amnesty provisions to which they are legally entitled. The result is a kind of indentured servitude, in which nannies can enter the underground economy but can't escape from it.

Despite its perversities, Peter Schuck of Yale Law

School suggests, the Simpson-Mazzoli law has arguably achieved its unspoken goal: sustaining a basically liberal immigration policy by threatening sanctions that were never intended to be enforced. Zoe Baird, in other words, is a victim of Congress's conflicted intentions. But it is easier to scapegoat Baird than to confront the national ambivalence about open borders, and the bigotries and realities that underlie it. •

PONTIDA  POSTCARD

BOSSI BOOTS

By James Sturz

In the summer of 1991, Umberto Bossi gave a picnic in the town of Pontida, thirty miles from Milan. Here, the defiant leader of the Northern League, Italy's separatist political movement, announced the formation of an independent Republic of the North.

The picnic was a typical League event. A helicopter released 120,000 fliers. Local youths, dressed as twelfth-century knights, brandished swords and carted around chainmail in the heat. There was a cookout and music. Portraits of Bossi sold for \$25 (\$40 framed). Five thousand supporters attended, though *Lombardia Autonomista*, the party newspaper, quickly pumped up the number to 25,000 and accused the Italian press of studying journalism under Ceausescu. The 51-year-old senator, renowned for extemporaneous attacks and impromptu vulgarity ("Journalist worms, always ready to sell yourselves ... you will become our servants and we will use you as doormats"), surprised nearly everyone when he read from a prepared statement. At the close of the day, a Milanese troupe played the triumphal march from *Aida*. The director of La Scala, Milan's opera house, called the picnic "pure theater."

Once an obscure fringe sect, the Northern League is now the fourth largest political party in Italy. In the national elections held last April, the League captured eighty of the Parliament's 945 seats. Just the month before, it had held two. And in the north, the League is now the prevailing power. In local elections this winter and last fall, League candidates captured better than 30 percent of the vote. At last year's Pontida picnic, some 25,000 followers went wild when Bossi announced a commission to draft a new Italian constitution. The country would be divided into three federated republics: the north, the center and the south. The division would cleave the wealthy, industrialized

north from an underdeveloped, "parasitic" south.

Bossi is almost single-handedly responsible for the Northern League's transformation into a powerful political bloc. A decade ago he would have seemed an unlikely politician. He dropped out of medical school (a photograph in his autobiography displays him splattered in blood), then supported his family by installing television antennas and giving private chemistry lessons to elementary school children. While in his 30s he began to run with radical political circles, dabbling for a bit with communism before founding the xenophobic Lombard League in 1979, which ultimately became the Northern League's strongest constituent. In 1982 he helped create *Lombardia Autonomista*. Five years later he was elected to Parliament on a Lombard League ticket. Now he spends his time dashing around the country, usually late and disheveled, shouting, "Thieves from Rome, it's over!" Two years ago no one gave him much notice. Today Prime Minister Giulio Amato's weak coalition government has reason to fear him.

Fear is precisely the emotion Bossi strives to instill in his many enemies. He peppers his speech with insults and threats of violence against rivals and potential betrayers (a broadsword and halberd lean casually against the wall in his Milan office). Political opponents are "arteriosclerotics," "sissies" and "human amoebas." Justice Minister Claudio Martelli is "barely virile, since he looks like a gay." Describing the new class of Northern League representatives, a disparate group that includes a 25-year-old student, former journalists and Bossi's veterinarian, he has told the Italian press, "It's unlikely they'll betray the League. They'd be risking their personal safety."

Bossi sees himself as a latter-day Alberto da Giussano, the twelfth-century knight who defended Lombardy from an invading Frederick Barbarossa. (The League's flag features Alberto's likeness.) "The League must be this today: a sword that sinks into the soft belly of the crumbling State, not a marsh in which the insects swarm about freely," he writes in his autobiography, *Wind from the North*.

Bossi's political opponents attack the Northern League as an assemblage of bigots—"Razzisti," "Fascisti," "Nazisti." At a demonstration against tent dwellers in Milan, for example, the League distributed leaflets that read, "If you like a multiracial society so much, you can move to New York." Luigi Rossi, the League's spokesman and a representative to Parliament, estimates that 25 percent of Italy's 800,000 (or more) immigrants are drug dealers.

Of course, the League isn't alone in its racist aspirations. Italy has developed its own fascist youth movement, the "Naziskins." And right-wing parties have begun to take hold. Last April Mussolini's granddaughter Alessandra was elected to Parliament on a neofascist Italian Social Movement ticket. (Mussolini is no fan of her competition. "Bossi is a demagogue," she

says. "His is a movement of hate.")

Many Italians cast a ballot for the Northern League not out of hatred but as a protest against Rome. The League demands regional independence to evade the notoriously corrupt government. In Palermo 60 percent of business owners pay a protection fee; in Catania (where the chief investigator of extortion rackets was gunned down in July), 90 percent pay. There is even a movement to make the fee tax-deductible. Bossi attributes the corruption to Christian Democrats, whose traditional power base has always been the south. His solution to the problem is simple: "The League will cut their throats, from ear to ear," he is fond of saying. This is a characteristic threat, to which he sometimes tacks his favorite applause line: "*La Lega Nord ce l'ha duro*"—"The Northern League has a hard-on."

Bossi can boast about the League's priapism because he knows that his opponents are impotent to stop him, much less to lead the country effectively. Last March the cover of the Italian newsweekly *Panorama* pictured Bossi diving headfirst into the political fray; the day after the elections, the country's newspapers pictured him as a knight, Bossi's esteemed Alberto, severing competitors' heads with a sword.

After April's elections the Milanese newspaper *Corriere della Sera* wrote, "An era of Italian history has ended, that of stability." For Northern League supporters, however, Bossi transcends history and politics. "I've been a supporter of the League for twelve years," says one fervent adherent. "Before that, I didn't vote. But I've met Bossi many times, and he is the messiah. Nobody sees Jesus, but Bossi you can hear and follow and touch. Anyone can have ideas, but Bossi's are the truth."

JAMES STURZ reports frequently on Italy.

A report from the famine.

THE BODYGUARDS

By Anna Husarska

HODDUR, SOMALIA

When the international military intervention started in Somalia almost two months ago, with the U.S. Marines disembarking in Mogadishu, the pictures of soldiers in combat uniform handing out biscuits to tiny skeletal black kids appeared on T.V. screens, reassuring American viewers that finally the starving children in Somalia were receiving food. Yet by the time the first Marine gave out the first biscuit, the French private organiza-

tion Médecins Sans Frontières had spent almost \$6 million in Somalia in 1992 alone (one-tenth of its annual budget for humanitarian interventions in thirty-four countries) on the distribution of thousands of tons of food and on medical assistance. These people *are* the international relief effort that the American-led foreign troops are to assist, following the U.N. Security Council decision and then announced to Somalis in leaflets dropped from American planes before the intervention.

The French doctors arrived here shortly after the fall of president-dictator Siad Barre in January 1991. At the time, the MSF was one of the very few relief groups in the country, and since then its volunteers—not only doctors, but also nurses and logistic officers called *logisticiens*—have worked without interruption through the civil war, all the clan and subclan conflicts and the famine that resulted from it. They have even survived the United States and U.N. invasion, which, despite all the glowing news reports, has complicated the task of bringing aid to the starving.

The mission in Hoddur started in September 1992 and now has three volunteers working on a nutrition and medical project. Hoddur, with a population of 20,000, consists mostly of round huts with walls made of interwoven sticks covered by clay (the clay has to be replaced after every rainy season), and cone-shaped straw roofs. Prickly shrubs stuck in the dry, red soil serve as fences. The sun is high and pitiless: we're 250 miles north of the equator. The slightest wind throws dust in the air, and it is often windy here, because the region is totally flat. Another reason for the dust is the fresh, unmarked mounds that fill all the town's open spaces.

Children and most adults walk around barefoot. Mothers carry their babies on their backs. As we pass them, people wave to us, shouting, "*Mesef mesef*." I have difficulties imagining Hoddur as Dodge City and the skinny men in tatters—mostly nomads who lost their camels because of war—as dangerous crooks. So I ask Philippe, the MSF *logisticien* in Hoddur (whose contractors are gunmen with M-16s and Kalashnikovs as well as teenagers with donkey carts bringing water from local wells), about the security situation. "*Ça va, c'est calme*," he reassures me, but then adds that foreigners who work here—not just for the MSF but for UNICEF, which runs a mother-and-child health center, and Irish Concern, which distributes wet food (dried is more likely to be looted and resold)—move around town only in cars with armed guards. "*Mesures de sécurité*," he explains. "In other towns in the interior, the announcement that foreign troops are coming has prompted violent attacks on relief workers. The looters, pushed out of Mogadishu, rush to do here their last-minute shopping."

I accompany Michèle, an MSF volunteer, on her daily round of the five feeding centers. Under the straw-cum-plastic roof of one center is the kitchen, a simple charcoal fireplace. Open oil drums serve as pots. A cook—paid by the MSF—stirs some thick brownish liquid called unimix, a kind of porridge that is cooked with water and

Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

Ninety-two Hours

There is lots of talk about changing education with "break-the-mold" schools or with alternative or restructured schools, but when you look at restructuring in a major company, you're likely to find that business has a much better idea of how to carry out this kind of change. The Saturn project is a case in point. Several years ago, General Motors and the United Auto Workers agreed to work together on a project that involved rethinking all their preconceived ideas about making a car, including the assembly-line process and the traditional labor-management structure. Now, after six years of work, they have a car that is selling as fast as they can produce it and a new model of automobile production.

What you usually hear about in connection with Saturn is the change in the distribution of power. Labor and management share the responsibility for all decisions and have from the beginning. But altering who makes the decisions is only part of the story. There's nothing that says a labor-management committee couldn't build an Edsel. The real importance of the Saturn experiment lies in the changes that have been made in the production process.

At the heart of these changes are Saturn's self-managed teams. In the old production line, every worker had a single, carefully specified job to perform. The Saturn line, as Beverly Geber describes it in "Saturn's Great Experiment" (*Training*, June 1992), is made up of work stations, each with a multi-step operation to perform and staffed by a team responsible for "deciding how to set up and work its station most efficiently." This means scheduling, budgeting and monitoring performance:

For instance, one person checks scrap and receives weekly reports on the amount of waste. If the line of the chart is rising, she reminds everyone . . . that they need to be more careful. Since team members know the cost of each part, they know how much money their scrap costs the company. Once a year, the team forecasts the amount of company resources it plans to use in the coming year. Each month team members get a report on what they budgeted and how much they spent . . . The teams even get a monthly breakdown on their telephone bills.

But teams do more than keep the line running. If they suspect that there might be a better way to install a door,



Imagine what
a training
program
like this
would do
for people
trying
to
restructure
their
schools.

for instance, it's their job to figure out how to change the existing process, with the help of a department that has a simulated assembly line and a staff of engineers. So the production process is constantly being monitored and improved.

How did Saturn find these smart, flexible and disciplined workers? It didn't find them; it used an impressive training program to give workers from 136 other General Motors plants the information and skills and ongoing help they needed to participate in this new way of running an automobile plant.

The original team members received more than 400 hours of training within their first few months at Saturn, and even now, new employees take part in a kind of internship. During the first two or three months, they split their time between classroom and on-the-job training. Furthermore, every employee at Saturn is expected to spend at least 92 hours a year in training—about 5 percent of their total work hours—and 5 percent of their salary depends on their doing so.

A central training group offers nearly 600 different courses, and as procedures are changed or new ones developed, new courses are also designed to assist employees in learning them.

Imagine what a training program like this would do for people trying to restructure their schools. Or, put another way, imagine trying to change things as basic as the culture of a school and the way people teach with a couple of days of inservice training a year and some hours stolen from class preparation periods. But that's about what most teams that are trying to restructure their schools have in terms of time and resources.

It is ironic that a bunch of people whose business is building cars understand so well the importance of educating their employees whereas people in education seem to assume that teachers and other school staff will be able to step right into a new way of doing things with little or no help. If it takes 600 courses and 92 hours a year per employee to make a better automobile, it will take that and more to make better schools. And if we're not willing to commit ourselves to this kind of effort, we are not going to get what we want.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1992 by Albert Shanker.

is composed of 40 percent corn flour (recently replaced by better-tasting rice flour because the kids weren't eating it), 30 percent precooked beans, 15 percent sugar and 15 percent oil. After boiling, it has the consistency of thick soup, and tastes a little like oatmeal, but awful. Nearby, the weakest children sit motionless, using carved-wood spoons to eat the unimix, which is served by local staff workers in colorful plastic bowls. The stronger ones come to fetch it themselves.

Three times a day, the children receive a ladleful of unimix, a glass of diluted, dried skimmed milk poured into it, and two high-protein biscuits. When available, camel's milk is added to the unimix to make the taste more familiar. Unimix is produced in Kenya and bought by the MSF with funds from the European Economic Community and from the U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance. Each month, 230 tons of it are flown in from Nairobi to Somalia.

Upon arrival at the feeding center, each child is measured and weighed. Babies are put into something resembling a pair of pants that are attached to a hanging scale; small children grab a stick hanging from the scale and dangle from it. If they are too weak, they too are put in the "pants." Then universal tables are used to determine their grade of malnutrition. All children are identified by a plastic bracelet bearing their name and number.

In the shadow of a shelter made with green reinforced plastic sheeting, a mother feeds a naked little boy whose eyes are covered with flies. It seems to me that it would be a miracle if the baby found any milk in her breast, which consists mostly of dry skin. But he does, because he vomits a little. The mother picks up a few stones from the soil and begins cleaning her dress with them. Feeling stupid, I offer her an Air France moist towlette.

The most serious victims of famine are referred to the Out-Patient Dispensary, a medical center also run here by the MSF. It has four rooms: one each for dressing, sterilization, consultation and a pharmacy. In fact, it's also an in-patient dispensary, with a dozen sick children in it—severely malnourished, often with T.B., anemia, scabies and big bellies from worms—and some seriously ill adults who stay overnight in two rooms. Other patients spill over into the courtyard. Most of the children here cannot walk, and those who can totter very slowly and have obvious problems carrying their heavy, disproportionately large heads on their tiny necks. Some are so emaciated that they look as if they have been vacuum-packed in skin. They cough a lot, but they never cry, never raise or turn their heads, even when the nurse comes on her daily round and softly touches their skulls. They are too weak to wave away the insistent flies.

At the entrance to a hut where patients who are dehydrated after a lengthy bout of diarrhea are given water with a special salt-and-mineral mixture, one child sits on the only chair in the vicinity. He looks 6, but he is really 16. He glances at me. I stare back, trying to produce a smile. The nurse, Sigolène, shows me how to establish the degree of malnutrition by measuring the MUAC, or middle upper-arm circumference. She seizes his arm

and invites me to do the same. My thumb touches my middle finger. Speaking about the size of his hand (to convince me that he really is 16), she puts mine on his to compare. The boy grabs my hand. Listening to a Somali doctor who is giving me his history, I hold the bones of the hand carefully, afraid I'll crush them. The boy's name is Nur. His parents are sitting next to him. He is one of seven children. Four of his siblings died in the past year. His mother is five months pregnant. Nur suffers from tuberculosis and malnutrition, is very dehydrated and cannot walk anymore. When he needs to urinate he moves with his legs bent up in the fetal position, swinging side to side in penguin-like steps away from the hut; for other necessities, his father carries him without ever unbending his legs. "He will certainly die soon," Sigolène says in a matter-of-fact voice.

Sigolène cannot do anything for Nur but rushes to help a child who was wounded by a grenade that exploded in his hands. A few days ago the French soldiers stationed in Hoddur started detonating the mines that they found in town. Kids who saw the soldiers wanted to help them, and brought plenty more of the devices, provoking panic among the *légionnaires*, who were not amused when they saw the smiling teenyboppers throwing grenades, rockets and bricks of pure TNT—detonators and all—at their feet. But thanks to their removal of mines, the MSF can reopen the mission in Wajit, a town fifty miles from Hoddur.

After having evacuated Wajit on very short notice two weeks ago, Monique, known here as Momo, a 38-year-old anesthetics nurse from Bordeaux, cannot wait to go back. She was on forced stand-by for too long: *mesures de sécurité*, again. By the very nature of their work—assistance in natural or man-made disasters—MSF's teams are often in life-threatening situations. During the war in Afghanistan, its thirteen hospitals (set up in combat zones) were repeatedly bombed, and one MSF logistician was murdered. In Turkey two volunteers were jailed for eight months, and more recently, during the evacuation of wounded from Vukovar, two MSF nurses were hurt when their truck struck a mine.

We avoid talking about mines during the trip to Wajit, but I can see that Momo is studying the red earth in front of us as closely as I am. The MSF Somali driver, Ali, points out the skeleton of a camel—the result of a mine that exploded last month—and says that a woman was killed as well. Over dinner that night—camel meat with rice—Jean, the logistician here, tells me about the problems he has with Wajit's "authorities." "The local strongmen try to make as much personal profit as possible—they couldn't care less about the malnourished kids. They exert pressure to get their own people employed by us, they raise the prices for all kinds of services and want to be paid for everything short of agreeing to eat the food they are handed."

At one of the feeding centers, Momo shows me a small, sad boy. He has a huge belly resulting from bowel worms, and his hair is light and breaks as I touch it—a sign of severe malnutrition, from which he is only just

Rethinking Public Education in America

When it comes to explaining the lack of improvement in academic achievement among American children, most people are all too eager to blame the nation's school system. Yet few can agree how best to reshape U.S. elementary and secondary schools to meet the educational challenges of the 1990s.

As a company with a major presence in this country and interest in its well-being, we share the concern about the state of U.S. education.

That's why Hitachi joined forces with the California Chamber of Commerce and other civic-minded organizations to sponsor the California Public Affairs Forums on educational reform. Aiming to develop a consensus on school reform, we invited several hundred educators, business executives, government officials, parents, and journalists from the San Francisco area to hear experts discuss their ideas on educational reform. Two days later in Los Angeles a similar audience heard another

prestigious panel address the same topic.

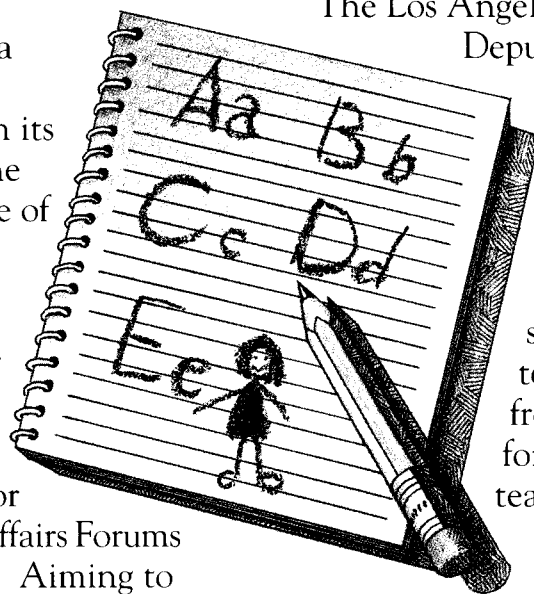
Each forum featured a leading proponent of educational reform as its keynote speaker. In San Francisco, it was William J. Bennett, formerly U.S. Secretary of Education and now a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute. The Los Angeles forum featured former

Deputy U.S. Secretary of Education David T. Kearns.

Among the proposed reforms: year-round school attendance; more specialized schools; standardized achievement tests and curricula; and freedom of school choice for both parents and teachers. The speakers also urged greater business involvement in public education.

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To obtain copies of the speakers' presentations and other information, write: Hitachi, P.O. Box 35146, Los Angeles, CA 90035.



HITACHI

beginning to recover. I read his name from his bracelet—Mohammed Ibrahim. Upon hearing it, the boy takes my hand and walks with me around the feeding center and out on the road toward the camel market. I remark to one of the employees from the center that if Mohammed does not let me go I will have to take him with me to New York. The man becomes animated: "Perhaps you adopt Mohammed?" he says.

"Perhaps."

"Well, then, you pay me \$1,000—no \$1,200."

"Why?"

"Because he is orphan."

"Why should I pay *you*?"

"Because I ask."

The other region of MSF activities in Somalia is the very green and fertile Lower Shaebelle area on the coast south of Mogadishu. From Merca, the area's capital, ten feeding centers are operated, and soon a small hospital will open.

On the road to Merca, fifty kilometers from Mogadishu, is K-50, an airstrip that is used extensively by *khat* growers from Kenya, whose planes arrive here every morning. Trucks race to Mogadishu with the day's shipment, because the sooner they arrive the better price they get. A bundle of *khat* looks a lot like basil, but the leaves are smaller and thinner. Each bundle would fit in a coffee cup and is enough for two to four men to chew for one day. It is rich in natural amphetamines and makes Somalis high, but it has always been legal here.

American guards who confiscate weapons at the entrance to the port in Mogadishu also take away the *khat* from local relief-agency employees. Only the weapons are eventually returned. "They are extremely aggressive, those Americans, when they seize this stuff," Pierre, an MSF logistician in Mogadishu, tells me. "They must have *khatted* themselves quite a lot," he jokes. The Marines I spoke with in Hoddur knew for a fact that it is as strong as cocaine and that *khat* chewing is responsible for most of the violence in Somalia. This is a little like blaming the crimes in Italy on those strong espressos that people take all day long.

The presence of the American troops is supposed to facilitate the task of the MSF and other relief agencies, but it doesn't always work out that way. MSF volunteers argue that the worst of the famine was over by the time the Marines arrived, and that their presence often hampers MSF's work. When President Bush came here over New Year's, a three-day no-fly order almost paralyzed the MSF operation by making it impossible for them to ship money from Mogadishu to Hoddur to pay their Somali staff. The presence of the press has also increased the cost of hiring armed guards and of renting cars (the journalists are willing to pay any price—it all goes on the expense account). All this influx of cash provoked the fall of the dollar from 7,000 to 3,500 Somali shillings. For MSF, it meant that its operation suddenly became more costly. "With nineteen domestics, seventeen logistic assistants, six house guards, seventeen vehicles security and eight

administration personnel, it makes a hell of a difference if the dollar is only worth half of what it was worth when we signed the contracts," says Julian, the MSF administrator (who was a metallurgist with British Steel before he did volunteer work, first in Thailand and now here).

Considering that the stated task of the Unified Task Force (UNITAF) was "to assist in the international relief effort" and create a "secure environment," the volunteers from non-American humanitarian organizations cite surprisingly many instances of UNITAF being a nuisance. "Before, it was dangerous, but we knew where the danger was," Pierre told me. "With our armed guards, we felt safe. Now the game is changed. Nothing is clear. Look, access between Mogadishu South [controlled by General Mohammed Farrah Aideed, one of the Somali warlords] and Mogadishu North [held by Mohammed Ali Mahdi, another warlord] is supposedly open, but in fact you cannot go to the other part of town without a convoy, and even so. . . ." In the capital, the security is far from guaranteed, despite loads of soldiers of different nationalities in tanks, armored vehicles and trucks or jeeps parading as if it were Red Square in the old days of October Revolution celebrations.

In fact, the UNITAF forces only "aggressively patrol" (as Colonel Fred Peck, the chief American spokesman here, put it) the port, the airport, the former American embassy compound, K4 (the town's main crossroad) and a few principal axes in the center. Nicolas, the national coordinator of the MSF in Somalia, is very disappointed by the workings of the American-led foreign troops: "The day after the troops landed, it was a general euphoria. My team circulated without armed guards. The result was that seven international relief cars were looted in town. The following morning, I asked my escorts to pick up their Kalash' again, and now my only worry is that the Marines may seize my guards' weapons."

The new checkpoint set up by the Marines on the K4 crossroad is also troublesome. Fortunately the MSF, which has an advantage over the foreign troops of two years' residence, knows Mogadishu well: "I was able to outwit them by taking small back streets," announces Brigitte, the medical coordinator. But sometimes a relief group falls into the trap. At the same checkpoint, an Irish organization, GOAL, had one of its cars (well-marked, with flags, stickers, etc.) stopped by UNITAF, and the occupants were forced to lie face-down on the road for a security check.

Discussions about the pros and cons of the intervention are rare in the MSF field missions, where the immediate task of saving people's lives, feeding the malnourished and attending to the sick keeps the volunteers busy. In the evening, nobody wants to discuss geopolitics—all they want to do is relax. Besides, in Hoddur and Wajit the situation was relatively calm even before the troops' arrival.

In Mogadishu it is different. Fights (often involving UNITAF forces) break out every day. Each night we hear gunfire around the MSF compound. People from other European NGOs (non-governmental organizations) come and decry the ineffectiveness of UNOSOM, the United Nation Operation in Somalia (the U.N. just cannot live without acronyms), which can't even protect its

own people and buildings. "With the bad image the U.N. has in Somalia, I worry about what will happen when the Marines hand the problems over to the blue helmets," Pierre says. The blue helmets are U.N. military forces who will be brought in when the coalition troops move out. It is rumored that the soldiers will mostly come from Muslim and African countries. "True, the port and the airport operate now, and food is mostly getting through to the interior, but if the Americans pull out

soon, the 'technicals' will be back and it will be the same or even worse. It will be a free-for-all."

But when it comes to giving a final verdict on the intervention, all the MSF volunteers agree that it is too soon to say anything. "The main thing is that they keep in mind what they wrote on those leaflets: 'United Nations forces are here to assist in the international relief effort,'" Brigitte says. Then she rushes off to prepare a shipment of antibiotics to Hoddur. •

What's wrong with Marian Wright Edelman.

THE GODMOTHER

By Mickey Kaus

In one of the many favorable profiles that have been written about Marian Wright Edelman, she explains why she founded the Children's Defense Fund. The year was 1973, and "[t]he country was tired of the concerns of the sixties. When you talked about poor people or black people, you faced a shrinking audience." Children, though, were different from poor people or black people. "I got the idea that children might be a very effective way to broaden the base for change."

By most conventional standards, Edelman's strategy has worked. The Children's Defense Fund is by now one of the capital's best-known, best-connected lobbies. Large corporations (Chrysler, Coca-Cola, Morgan Guaranty Trust) proudly help finance its \$9 million, 120-employee budget. Bloomingdale's puts CDF's 1-800 number on its shopping bags at Christmas; Ben & Jerry's publicizes the Fund on its popsicles. News organizations eagerly disseminate the seemingly safe, authoritative data that are CDF's stock in trade. "The Children's Defense Fund, which is widely recognized for keeping accurate statistics on children, reports that every thirty-five seconds an American child is born into poverty," was how Peter Jennings opened the evening news one night in 1991.

CDF's influence first became apparent during the Reagan years, when it was surprisingly successful defending programs such as Head Start and the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) nutrition program against Republican assault. The paradigmatic *Washington Post* headline of the day ("REAGAN BUDGET CUTS SEEN HARMING POOR CHILDREN") almost invariably referred to a document put out by CDF or Washington's other major liberal statistic factory, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. During Reagan's tenure, CDF even helped sneak

through a large expansion of Medicaid coverage for poor children. At the end of the decade, CDF led the coalition of liberal interest groups that lobbied for the \$5 billion-a-year child care bill enacted in 1990.

But with the 1992 election, Edelman and CDF have hit a jackpot, in the form of Hillary Clinton. A former CDF staff attorney who served as the organization's chairperson until last year, Hillary made her first postelection appearance at a CDF fund-raiser, where according to press accounts she whispered to Edelman, "I love you very much." When the Clinton economic "summit" convened last December, C-SPAN addicts could see the president-elect with the vice president-elect seated at his right hand and Edelman at his left. Meanwhile, Hillary's successor as CDF chair, Donna Shalala, is the new secretary of health and human services. Power-watchers discerned a Marian/Hillary/Donna axis at work when an HHS job was denied to ex-Representative Tom Downey, who had angered Edelman during the child care debate by departing from CDF's chosen legislative strategy. (Edelman accused Downey of being "willing to rob millions of children.") Nor did it escape notice that Shalala downplayed the incoming president's promised work requirement for welfare recipients, which CDF was lobbying quietly to scuttle.

The latest issue of *Harper's Bazaar* uses the Hillary connection as the peg for a profile of Edelman as "Saint Marian," an "unrelenting visionary who has spent her life leading the crusade to help our nation's children." But Edelman acquired a near-unassailable aura of selflessness long before her recent ascent. At least three times in the last six years, *The Washington Post* has chronicled her courageous role as a young lawyer in the civil rights movement, her interracial marriage to former Robert Kennedy aide Peter Edelman, her three sons'

"Baptist bar mitzvahs." She probably has more honorary degrees (sixty-eight) than anyone except Father Hesburgh (124). In 1991 Jennings crowned her "The Children's Champion" when naming her ABC's "Person of the Week." She won a MacArthur "genius" award, which she said she would use to hire a cook so she could spend more time with her family.

Indeed, Edelman's parental virtues are also widely celebrated, not least by herself in her recent best seller, *The Measure of Our Success: A Letter to My Children and Yours*. A slim, ninety-seven-page volume containing various autobiographical homilies ("Twenty-Five Lessons for Life," "Passing on the Legacy of Service"), the book helps secure Edelman's image as what *Harper's Bazaar* calls "America's universal mother"—a stern but wise taskmaster tending to an extremely extended family. "Ask Marian Wright Edelman about her children, the more than 61 million of them under 18 years of age, and she will tell you they are America's poorest citizens" (*The New York Times*, 1986). It's hard to think of anyone else who could get away with having her own son write an introduction to her book calling her "probably one of the most honest people in the world...."

Given Edelman's intimidating connections, not many Democrats in Washington are willing to speak about her on the record, let alone criticize her. Recently Jason DeParle of the *Times* pointed out that in many areas—most obviously welfare reform and child care—the paleoliberal CDF and the "new Democrats" of the Democratic Leadership Council are poised for bitter policy disputes. But not out in the open, at least not yet. "You ain't gonna get me into a fight with Marian Wright Edelman," the DLC's Elaine Kamarck told DeParle.

Yet a debate obviously will happen. The question is whether it will be a debate on CDF's terms—that is, a debate about "America's children"—or whether it will be on terms that are ... well, that are more honest. Specifically, the "children's" approach to politics pioneered by Edelman and CDF promotes at least three propositions that tend to corrupt what is a necessary national dialogue about poverty and the family.

1. *Poverty is a children's issue.* The trouble begins with Edelman's founding insight: that people who don't want to talk about blacks or the poor can be mobilized by talk of helping children. CDF rhetoric invariably pits "the little children of today" against those who want to "blatantly sacrifice" them or "blame" them for social problems. "If the drastic cuts which your administration is now considering to children's programs occur," reads a typically feverish CDF press release, "it will establish once and for all the hypocrisy of your professed concern about children and families in America." And that was a 1980 release directed at Jimmy Carter! CDF publications feature a childlike drawing with the cloying inscription, "Dear Lord, be good to me. The sea is so wide and my boat is so small."

To work, this strategy requires that CDF reduce every issue of anti-poverty policy to a question of "protecting children who cannot speak for themselves." Not only

are Head Start, WIC and immunization cast as children's issues, so are welfare, day care, housing and employment. The result is an artificial constriction of the universe of relevant interests and values. Take day care. Experts debate whether day care outside the home is good for children. But it's clearly a valuable benefit for their parents. Making day care a "kids" issue misstates (and perhaps understates) the case for subsidizing it.

Welfare is a more disturbing example. The federal government's most important welfare program is Aid to Families with Dependent Children. It sends cash to poor single parents, mainly women. CDF's literature says the program was "designed to be a safety net for children deprived of parental support due to the death, illness, incapacity or absence of a parent." But AFDC's checks go to the mothers, not the children, and the mothers as well as the children live off them. Thus the great half-century-long debate over AFDC has centered on whether, by supporting single mothers who don't work, the program encourages single parenthood and dependency.

That's not a debate about children. It's a debate about adults. Cast welfare as a children's issue, CDF-style, and poof! the crucial questions of work and dependency disappear. ("The bottom line is that 9 million poor children who get an average of \$6 a day for all their basic needs are not the cause of our country's problems....") Indeed, you can read through CDF's thirty-three-page report on "Child Poverty in America," and its 114-page report on "The State of America's Children" without coming across any acknowledgment that welfare dependency might even be a legitimate concern.

2. *The problems of the black ghettos are simply part of the general problem of poverty.* In 1986 Edelman delivered Harvard's W.E.B. Du Bois lectures, which were collected in a book, *Families in Peril*. This was the time, in the late '80s, when respectable opinion was rediscovering the problem of ghetto poverty—the "underclass." Edelman couldn't go to Harvard and pretend (as she does in CDF's pronouncements) that there is no problem of adult welfare dependency. After labeling as a "myth" the notion that welfare encourages such dependency, she notes that "[w]ithout question, some segment of the poverty population also relies heavily upon income transfers for sustained periods." She cites a study reporting that a third of AFDC recipients receive welfare in eight or more different years, and that "non-white unmarried mothers who dropped out of high school will average ten years on welfare."

Having abandoned one evasion, however, Edelman quickly employs another. "Even these realities," she argues, "do not imply that nothing can be done to attack the problems of poverty in the United States. One of the oldest strategies for resisting social changes is to focus attention on the most intractable aspects of a problem and then to cast them as justifications for inaction, complacency or resignation" (emphasis added).

Well, yes, poverty is a broader problem than the underclass. There are many more people living in

poverty than are trapped in urban ghettos. We could do a lot to attack poverty (by giving larger tax credits to the working poor, for example) without solving the underclass problem. But that doesn't mean the underclass problem—the "most intractable aspect" of poverty—doesn't exist, and isn't worth addressing. One of the oldest strategies for resisting attempts to confront difficult social problems is to focus attention on easier problems.

This strategy, too, was present at CDF's creation. Just as Edelman's organization pretends that problems of the the poor are problems of helpless children, so it often pretends that the problems of the ghettos—mainly, the black ghettos—are really problems afflicting all Americans. The Defense Fund's literature denounces the "myths of child poverty as almost exclusively an urban, minority (and in the crudest stereotype, black)" phenomenon. A top-playing CDF factoid is, "Only one-third of poor children are black."

Unfortunately, if you look at Americans who are poor for a long time (as opposed to Americans with low incomes for only a year or two), more than 50 percent are black. The figures on long-term welfare recipients are even more dramatic (more than 60 percent are black). Similarly, if you look for areas with a high incidence of social problems (female-headed families, welfare receipt, low male participation in the labor force and school dropouts), you will find that the vast majority are in large cities. About 60 percent of these areas are majority-black. About 20 percent are majority-white.

One of CDF's own statistics unintentionally makes the point. "There are about as many whites as blacks receiving AFDC," declared Edelman, in her best stereotype-busting voice, after the L.A. riots last year. *About as many.* Wait a minute. That must mean—what is indeed true—that there are actually not quite as many, that there are at any given moment a few *more* blacks on welfare than there are whites, though blacks make up only 12 percent of the population. One of the "crudest stereotypes"

about welfare and race turns out to be basically accurate.

Edelman must know this. But she apparently still believes, as she wrote in *Families in Peril*, that "support for whatever [is] labeled black and poor" is not enough, that the voters can't be aroused to combat poverty unless it can be given a face that is not only childlike but largely Caucasian as well. The impulse is the same as that of anti-AIDS activists who believe they won't get funding for AIDS research unless they can portray it as a "straight" disease. The problem, in both cases, is that the strategy grounds activism in a lie. Black ghetto

poverty is the most "intractable aspect" of American poverty, and it is also our most severe social problem. Yet as America's "inner cities" explode with crime and rioting, Edelman is left trapped in her superstructure of deception, criticizing the country's "obsession" with the underclass, reciting statistics about the crisis of poor white children.

3. *There is no culture of poverty, or at least none we should worry about.* Again, in her Harvard lectures (though not her CDF pronouncements) Edelman grudgingly acknowledges the existence of "a small subgroup of the poverty population alienated from or hostile to the larger society ... lacking in coping skills and resources and, there-

fore, the most difficult to assist." Significantly, perhaps, the CDF plans to launch "a major new Black Community Crusade for Children" later this year. But the exact content of this new venture is still unclear. (CDF's annual report says it will "help reconnect the black middle class with poor black children.") So the best evidence as to what Edelman would actually do to address the underclass problem remains the Harvard lectures. They are revealing.

What they reveal is that though Edelman may not be a '60s anachronism in every respect, she is in one respect, because she believes in an idea that was embraced by liberals (and many conservatives) in that time and no other: the guaranteed income. "We need



MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

some form of minimum guaranteed income for families or negative income tax or children's allowance," Edelman declares, "that will . . . guarantee all Americans a decent living."

This position isn't crazy. From about 1967 until the mid-1970s it was the conventional wisdom. Economists from Galbraith to Friedman, politicians from McGovern to Nixon, endorsed its logic. That logic goes like this: the poor are no different from anybody else. They want to get married. They want to work. But welfare as now structured encourages single parenthood (because it's basically available only to single parents). It discourages work (because if welfare recipients go to work they lose a large chunk of their benefits). The way to eliminate these perverse incentives is to let poor people stay on welfare if they marry, and let them collect welfare if they need the money, whether or not they work.

The major flaw in this argument is its assumption that the single-parent, non-working families now on welfare would become two-parent working families if they could do so and get more money for it (through some combination of welfare and earnings). But what if habits of single-parenthood and dependency are so entrenched that those patterns would persist even in a "guaranteed income" regime? In other words, what if, as long as cash welfare remains available to single mothers who don't work, a large number of women would still become single mothers who don't work and depend on welfare? That possibility captures an operative definition of what is meant by a "culture of poverty."

Some implicit or explicit notion of a poverty culture has caused most welfare experts, even most liberals, to abandon the idea of the guaranteed income. Edelman is not one of them. She argues that "we could even reconcile ourselves to supporting decently that small group of the poor—perhaps a group that we can call the underclass—families with a parent who is physically able to work, but *unwilling* or unable to do so, by training or *acculturation*. We could recognize that it is more important to our society that every child has enough to eat than that every parent be forced to work" (emphasis added).

Perhaps buried in this conclusion is an implicit argument: that the culture of poverty—i.e., people "unwilling or unable" to work "by acculturation"—is insignificant; that the provision of money to such people will in itself have depathologizing effects; or that even if it doesn't transform parents' lives, having "enough to eat" will transform the lives of subsequent generations. But Edelman does not proceed to make this argument, and you do not get the impression that she wants to. Rather, she wants to cut the argument off. Indeed, most of the relevant chapter in *Families in Peril* is spent railing against "our obsession with the motivation and behavior of the poor—their sexual as well as their work behavior"—in other words, railing against attempts to confront the culture of poverty whose existence she herself implicitly concedes.

The main reason Edelman gives for refusing to grap-

ple with the "culture" problem is a venerable (and, again, political) one: that it will be "a diversion . . . a way of blaming the poor." Even if there is a poverty culture, the argument goes, we'd better not talk honestly about it, or the majority will simply give up on the poor. Martin Luther King Jr., in a passage quoted prominently by Edelman, said: "The danger will be that the problems will be attributed to innate Negro weaknesses and used to justify further neglect and to rationalize continued oppression."

But King was making a more nuanced point than Edelman's. "As public awareness of the predicament of the Negro family increases," he argued, there would be "danger," but there would be "opportunity" too. "The opportunity will be to deal fully rather than haphazardly with the problem of a whole—to see it as a social catastrophe . . . brought on by long years of brutality and oppression—and to meet it as other disasters are met, with adequacy of resources." When it came to confronting the poverty culture, King was issuing a caution, not a cease and desist order.

In practical political terms, King's "opportunity" seems so far to be outweighing his "danger." True, some Americans, both voters and politicians, still react to the notion of an "underclass" or "culture of poverty" by throwing up their hands or worse (David Duke comes to mind). But more have reacted by trying to figure out how this culture might be transformed. When the idea of a poverty culture was revived in the late 1980s, it didn't spark a wave of vicious budget cutting against people who were "poor by their own fault" due to "innate" weaknesses. It spurred proposals to spend billions of dollars to offer training and day care—and to condition welfare payments on work—so people would leave the poverty culture. Clinton built on those ideas in the 1992 campaign, pledging to impose "strict" two-year time limits on welfare, after which "those who can work will have to go to work," in community service jobs if necessary. The purpose, he said, was to "break the permanent culture of dependence which embraces 20 to 25 percent of those on public assistance." At last report Clinton plans \$7 billion in new spending on this effort. That's not enough. But it's not a "diversion" or "neglect."

And there are alternative explanations, aside from fear of "diversion," for Edelman's refusal to let CDF grapple openly with the "culture" issue. An obvious one is that her actual position—welfare should be expanded into a guaranteed income—is a deadweight political loser. How many politicians could win an election today arguing that the solution to the problems of South-Central Los Angeles is to put everyone on the dole? Clinton certainly didn't take that position—at least not the Clinton who was on the ballot. If CDF openly defended what Edelman said at Harvard she believes, its influence would be badly diminished. Even Bloombergdale's might have second thoughts.

The way the CDF vs. DLC debate is often cast—as a sort of free will vs. social causality controversy—can obscure the essential point here. In this debate, Edelman is

scripted to demand more money to eliminate the “root causes” of poverty, while denouncing any discussion of “individual responsibility” and “values” as victim-blaming. The DLC’s neoliberals are scripted to point out that a fixation on “root causes” tends to assume away the role of human agency—as if low income, rather than sex, was the proximate cause of illegitimate babies.

But Edelman is quite comfortable—too comfortable—with this form of the debate. She is, for one thing, perfectly prepared to talk about “individual responsibility” when necessary. She lectures college graduates on the need to form two-parent families. She criticizes the “messages of bliss without responsibility frequently transmitted by mass media and rock music.” At the economic summit, when Bill Clinton asked Edelman whether, when it comes to child poverty, it isn’t important to change “the culture, the values . . . of the parents,” she segued easily into a spiel on parents’ “personal responsibility.” What really threatens Edelman’s guaranteed-income position, after all, isn’t talk of “individual responsibility.” It is precisely talk of a systemic, economic “root cause”—the possibility that a root cause of the poverty culture is welfare itself. Edelman may be happy to have her opponents talk about “individual responsibility” instead.

When Martin Luther King was assassinated, he was working on the Poor People’s Campaign, a crusade that (according to Nicholas Lemann’s book, *The Promised Land*) had been proposed by Robert Kennedy in a conversation with Marian Edelman. The idea was to have the poor come to Washington and simply stay until Congress acted. Edelman took Kennedy’s idea to King, who enthusiastically adopted it. This was the last of King’s attempts, in Lemann’s words, to find “the magic formula that would convince the country as a whole to identify with poor blacks in the cities in the same way that it had identified with Rosa Parks in Montgomery . . . to see them as decent people who had been subjected to a wrong that could now be righted.” But the Poor People’s Campaign, taking place after King’s death, was a flop, ending in a disastrous meeting with President Nixon (attended by Edelman, among others).

The CDF can be seen as Edelman’s attempt to find King’s magic formula, to give the fight against black poverty the same right/wrong cast as the fight for civil rights. Many of the organization’s characteristics—its righteousness, its tendency to see the poverty debates as a conflict between good people and bad, between the “helpless” and the forces of “callous” neglect and “greed”—parallel characteristics of the civil rights movement from which Edelman emerged. Like that movement, CDF says, “We know what to do.” The only question is “if America has the political will.” No room here for doubts, for wrestling with what Harvard poverty expert David Ellwood has called the “helping conundrums” (that material security may discourage work, that unstigmatized support for single mothers may encourage single motherhood). Instead the issues are stark and simple. “You don’t let your

children die when you can save them.”

This strategy, again, has an obvious appeal. The sense that “nothing works,” as Edelman points out, can cripple attempts to address a problem. But the “we know what to do” approach also carries a burden, namely the burden of formulating a “what to do” that is sufficient to solve the problem. This is a burden the civil rights movement substantially met. (The Voting Rights Act effectively ended the problem of black electoral disfranchisement; the Civil Rights Act effectively addressed the problem of apartheid in commerce.)

When it comes to the problem of ghetto poverty, however, Edelman has not met this burden. Much of CDF’s literature consists of promoting desirable ameliorative programs as if they were (in Edelman’s words) “solutions to the problems that plague America’s disadvantaged children and families.” Head Start, for example, may well be a “cost effective” program; some studies show it produces significant benefits. But those benefits are incremental. Does anyone think that “fully funding” Head Start—quadrupling or quintupling its \$2.2 billion budget—is going to come close to canceling out the impact of underclass culture on ghetto children? Can the WIC program, which provides special high-nutrition foods to low-income mothers, prevent infant malnutrition when ghetto mothers lead lives so disorganized they don’t pick up the WIC vouchers when they are available?

Edelman’s real, unadvertised solution—the guaranteed income—might or might not have a bigger impact. We don’t know, because it’s never been tried. But its success is, to say the least, uncertain. The guaranteed-income controversy is certainly not a question of mustering the “will” and “resources” to implement a proven cure. Edelman doesn’t even have the “will” to let CDF talk openly about the idea.

Edelman prides herself on being an “inside player,” on her ability to set realistic goals and deliver concrete results. “We got \$2.5 billion back,” she exulted after one Reagan-era budget battle. But Bill Clinton’s campaign showed that what Edelman apparently sees as politically necessary pretenses may not be necessary at all. Clinton didn’t pretend poverty was a “kids” issue. He faced up to the question of work and dependency. He acknowledged the existence of an “underclass.” He proposed a solution (the two-year time limit on welfare) that was at least credibly sufficient to, as he put it, “break the culture of poverty.” And he won the voters’ support.

Are American taxpayers more likely to open their wallets for someone with an unvarnished analysis of the underclass problem, or someone who tries to overwhelm analysis with emotionalism about children? Marian Edelman’s strategy may have worked to “get \$2.5 billion back” for a few threatened programs during the Republican era that has now ended. There is little evidence that it will get the \$25 billion to \$50 billion that would be necessary for any serious assault on ghetto poverty. The truth, in this case, shall not only set you free. It may also get you funding. •

BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Out of the Past

Britain has developed a kind of director that is relatively scarce in this country, the one who is centrally interested in the working class. In the United States we had the late Martin Ritt, who returned to that subject from time to time; and we have documentarians, like Barbara Kopple. But the British examples concentrate much more closely on working people, and they do it in fiction, thus are nearer to the mainstream. Mike Leigh, Terence Davies and Ken Loach are hardly box-office bonanzas, but they are filmmakers of declared allegiance and, though they may briefly wander, they are faithful to it.

Is there anything new to be said about the working class as such—in Britain or elsewhere? Generally speaking, no; but as with most subjects in art, the question isn't novelty. Or to put it properly, the novelty arises not from the subject but from the fresh experience of humanity that's evoked.

Ken Loach does this dynamically in his new film *Riff-Raff* (Fine Line). Loach (b. 1936), whose earliest films shown here were *Poor Cow* and *Kes*, has found exactly the right material for himself in a screenplay by Bill Jesse. Jesse, since deceased, was a writer who supported himself as a construction laborer. His screenplay is virtually devoid of novelty, but it's a good deal more than sufficient in character.

On character, then, Loach has fixed, which in cinematic practice results in a particular texture. He works in close much of the time, often in close-up, often with hand-held camera, trying without ostentation to make that camera

more of a companion than an observer.

A gang of workers is helping in the renovation of some old buildings in London. All of these men are, one way or another, likable; all the bosses, and their foremen, are bastards. But so engaging are these workers that the neatly assigned colors are not bothersome; they seem merely to mark out the grid on which the film will operate.

The story is minimal. One of the workers, a young Scotsman (Robert Carlyle), meets a young Irish singer (Emer McCourt) through a coincidence connected to the renovation. They become lovers and live together—squatting in unoccupied premises as do all the other workers. The lovers get on famously for a while, though her singing career does not. He has to make a quick trip to Glasgow to attend his mother's funeral. He comes back to find her doing drugs, which for him is the finish. He has seen what drugs have done to close relatives. They part.

This story, however, seems no more

than the thread on which the dailiness of the workers' lives is hung. Besides the Scotsman, the group includes a middle-aged leftie from Liverpool, a man from Bristol, men from other regions, three of them blacks. Two of the blacks are African, one is a cockney who dreams of going to Africa. The leftie gets fired for protesting safety conditions, and the film's ending proves that his protest was just.

The only real flaws are the first shot and the last. We first see, and we last see, rats scurrying around in rubble. As symbolism, this is so trite that it makes us stiff with apprehension at the start and irked at the end because we see how inapt it is. The men with whom we've just spent ninety-four minutes may be thought of as rodents by their bosses but certainly not by themselves. They are the opposite of self-conscious victims: they are lively and funny—and vulgar in a way that strips the lacquer off our own vulgarity. All the leading actors were professionals but were required to have had construction experience; the secondary players were all construction workers who now are, at least a bit, professional actors. They all acquit themselves with energy, precisely used, which is another tribute to Loach, who clearly had their confidence.

The film is in English and is subtitled. A good idea. The only previous example I can remember is *Sparrows Can't Sing* (1962), which was about cockneys. It's helpful here because of several regional accents, and it would in fact be welcome in some American films where Mumble is King. But the subtitles are the only relative innovation in a picture that prospers by dealing so chummily with an old topic.

Some directors of talent and seriousness sometimes force us to doubt that they have good sense. Such a one is Louis Malle, whose recent *Damage* makes us wonder how he could have accepted the screenplay. With Agnieszka Holland's *Olivier Olivier* (Sony Pictures Classics), the question presses more sharply because

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Hoffa. An American morality tale—good works embroiled in corruption. The acting (Jack Nicholson as the labor leader), the directing (Danny DeVito, who also is in it) could hardly be bettered. (Reviewed 1/18/93) **Intervista.** Federico Fellini at the height of his genius, with little to say but saying it enchantingly. An interview with him converted into bliss. (12/7/92) **Malcolm X.** Another imperfect but important bio pic. Spike Lee's directing, Denzel Washington's performance waver but win through. (12/21/92) **The Oak.** Romanian. Lucian Pintilie's very black comedy about two lovers in Ceausescu's next-to-last year. Strikingly directed, vibrantly acted, especially by the young woman, Maia Morgenstern. (2/8/93) —SK

the picture was her original idea.

Holland (b. 1948) is Polish-born. She wrote for Andrzej Wajda in Poland and did some directing of her own screenplays before she immigrated to France in 1981. We can't indict the French film world for having "arted" her up—she showed signs early—but France hasn't helped her weakness: for tackling serious subjects without thinking them through, relying subliminally on high intentions and fancy cinematography to sustain her.

The basic idea of *Olivier Olivier* is familiar: the return of someone long mysteriously absent; then, after the joyous welcome, the doubts about the returnee's authenticity. Pirandello used it in *As You Desire Me*; Jean-Claude Carrière and Daniel Vigne used it in *The Return of Martin Guerre*. Perhaps Holland repeats Olivier's name in the title because she wants to hint that there are two of them. (But then why did she call a previous film *Europa, Europa*?)

A French 9-year-old named Olivier, who lives with his parents and an older sister out in the countryside, disappears one day. Six years later the Paris police pick up a 15-year-old male prostitute who is interrogated by the very inspector who, once stationed in the provinces, had investigated Olivier's disappearance. The inspector somehow connects the youth with Olivier, asks some questions that the youth answers correctly,

then takes Olivier back to his family.

Emotional readjustments, after the emotional turmoil of his disappearance, take time. Olivier never explains why he had run off. One night, after some turmoil, Olivier crawls into bed with his sister, now 17, and they soon make love. She accepts it pleasantly.

Is this to what all the film's travail has led—the consummation of incest? Nay. Soon, through a clumsy trick, it's discovered that the boy Olivier had been murdered—the real one—by the man whom the police would naturally have suspected first if this weren't a Holland film. After still more turmoil, the impostor is apparently accepted. (At one point the family watches *Boris Godunov* on T.V. Possibly an analogy with the false Dimitri in that opera?)

Well, is *this* what the whole film was about? The transmutation of seeming incest into an acceptable love? The willingness of bereft parents to accept a proxy? (And, by the way, how did the false Olivier know the answers to the inspector's questions in Paris?)

Through all the emotional tempests, the mother and father, played by Brigitte Roüan and François Cluël, navigate expertly. The older children, Grégoire Colin and Marina Golovine, are fetching. Holland directs her cast and everything else suavely, but what was the whole thing *for*? •

The examined life of Michel Foucault.

Subject and Abject

BY ALEXANDER NEHAMAS

I.

Michel Foucault is the most important and controversial figure of what is loosely known as post-structuralism. The author of more than twenty books, as well as a huge number of uncollected writings, he will doubtless be read long after the other writers associated with that movement have been forgotten. Foucault's controversial views and his unconventional life have provoked admiration and disdain, adulation and disgust. His supporters and his detractors see him in radically divergent

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ways. On one point, however, they must agree: Foucault was a very famous man. And now, less than ten years after his death of AIDS in 1984 at the age of 58, we have two very different biographies to prove it.

Foucault was that extremely rare creature, a genuine intellectual who was an international celebrity. Though a good deal of his thought remains opaque, many of his views have become part of current discourse; the prevalence of the word "discourse" itself is a fine example of his influence. His impact on philosophy, history, criticism, political theory and the study of sexuality is already pervasive. He supplanted Sartre, while they were both alive, as the leading intellectual of Paris. "When I was young," he once said, "he was the one—along with

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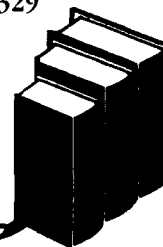
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everything he represented, the terrorism of *Les Temps modernes*—from whom I wanted to free myself.”

For Foucault, however, freedom was incompatible with reproducing someone else's role. He was convinced, more generally, that the effort to replace institutions is doomed to perpetuate them. In *Madness and Civilization*, for example, he argued that Samuel Tuke, who in the early nineteenth century replaced the prisonlike confinement of the insane with a more humanitarian treatment, simply produced a new prison, a new kind of punishment, by holding the insane responsible for their actions. In Foucault's rather startling analysis, leg irons and the bonds of conscience were one:

Liberation of the insane, abolition of punishment, constitution of a human milieu—these are only justifications. The real operations were different. In fact, Tuke created an asylum where he substituted for the free terror of madness the stifling anguish of responsibility; fear no longer reigned on the other side of the prison gates, it now raged under the seals of conscience.

“The soul,” he wrote, “is the prison of the body.”

There were two premises to Foucault's thought. The first, derived from Nietzsche and never abandoned, was that every human situation is a product of history, though we may be convinced that it is a natural fact. That conviction prevents us from seeing that our particular views, habits and institutions are contingent; that there was a time when they did not exist, and so there can be a time when they will exist no longer. Many of Foucault's specific historical claims have been disputed, but no philosopher has ever matched his ability to find history where others find nature, to see contingency where others see necessity. He was a master at revealing the emergence of radically new objects—insanity, illness, even the human individual—where others had detected only a difference in the treatment of unchanging realities. His historical vision alone makes him a thinker who cannot be ignored.

Foucault's second premise, which he modified in later years, was a relentless suspicion of “progress.” He had an uncanny ability to see the dark side of every step toward the light, to grasp the price at which every advance had to be bought. And he believed that the price was never a bargain. Whether it was Tuke's and Pinel's treatment of the insane, or the penal reforms of the early nineteenth century, which exchanged physical torture for constant surveil-

lance, Foucault always discovered one horror replaced by another.

He believed that individuals and groups were elements of a vast network of meaning and control over which they were powerless. Much of his work was a description of that network, showing its historical basis and grimly hinting that it was self-perpetuating. Reversing Clausewitz's brutal formula, he claimed even more brutally that power, the nature of which obsessed him throughout his life, “is war, a war continued by other means.” And since all relations were for him relations of power, warfare is constant:

None of the political struggles, the conflicts waged over power, with power, for power, the alterations in the relations of forces, the favoring of certain tendencies, the reinforcements etc., etc., that come about within ... “civil peace” ... none of these phenomena in a political system should be interpreted except as a continuation of war.

Sartre had believed that human beings are ultimately the subjects of

Michel Foucault

by Didier Eribon

translated by Betsy Wing

(Harvard University Press, 374 pp., \$14.95 paper)

The Passion of Michel Foucault

by James Miller

(Simon and Schuster, 491 pp., \$27.50)

their actions, that they are free and sovereign agents, even if freedom itself is not the product of choice. “Man,” he famously wrote, “is condemned to be free.” Foucault detested this humanistic existentialism. He argued that the “subject,” far from being free, is itself the product of historical forces that cannot be mastered; and that different conditions produce different sorts of subjects. In his early works Foucault claimed that what we are today is a creation of the last 200 years, brought about by specific and oppressive arrangements, which he discussed in books like *Madness and Civilization*, *The Birth of the Clinic* and *Discipline and Punish*. His own equally famous formulation was this:

Man is an invention of recent date. And one perhaps nearing its end.

If those arrangements were to disappear as they appeared, if some event of which we can at the moment do no more than sense the possibility—without knowing either what its forms will be or what it promises—were to cause them to crumble, as the ground of Classical thought [beginning in the sixteenth century] did, at the end of the eighteenth century, then one can certainly wager that man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea.

II.

It is a great irony, then, that Foucault's attempt to free himself from Sartre landed him in a similar role. He once claimed that he wrote precisely in order “to remain anonymous,” but his name is now known well enough to have justified two biographical studies and a third has already been announced. And the irony is still greater. What sort of biography can be written of a man who seems to have thought that the “author,” like the “subject,” is a fiction, a recent and oppressive invention? Far from being the origin of the meaning and the value of a literary or philosophical work, the author, in Foucault's account, is a construct aimed at preventing literature from being read, as he thought it ought to be read, in radically novel ways, unconstrained by considerations of genre, intention or historical plausibility: “The author is the principle of thrift in the proliferation of meaning.”

This is an idea that is easily misunderstood. Foucault did not make the silly claim that writers do not exist or that books get written by themselves, any more than his notion of “the death of Man” implies that people are not real. He was arguing, rather, that certain apparently natural ways of treating both books and human beings are specific to given historical periods. Literary works in particular, which are open to radically divergent readings, have been treated as the products of a special kind of writer, “the author,” who (unlike, say, the writer of a scientific treatise) is accorded ultimate power over their meaning. We generally read literary works to find out what their author meant in composing them. But this, says Foucault, is a comparatively recent practice, and the real aim of this conception of authorship is not so much to glorify an individual (though it does that) as to create a mechanism “by which one impedes the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition, decomposition and recomposition of fiction.”

The view that the author is not really a person whose word about the work is final, but represents instead a particular and repressive way in which texts are treated, is a crucial part of poststructuralism's attack on the humanist conception of the author as a genius. It creates rather a thorny problem for all those who wish to write sympathetically about Foucault. How should we understand someone who seems to think that “understanding” is itself less a goal of cognition than a means of control, one element of the indissoluble pair to which he referred as “power/knowledge”?

Both Didier Eribon and James Miller

are acutely aware of this problem, and the manner in which each of them deals with it nicely epitomizes the sort of biography that each of them has written. Eribon turns to further facts about Foucault's life. He points out that Foucault actually did what authors do: signed his books, connected them by means of prefaces, articles and interviews, disputed readings, answered criticisms, participated in conferences devoted to his work. Eribon's biographical method appeals primarily to Foucault's public, institutional activity. His book is mainly an account of Foucault's career, to which the personal life is subordinated.

Eribon writes well and often absorbingly. He is reticent about Foucault's homosexuality; but with the exception of sex, which is a rather significant exception in the case of Foucault, he has written the sort of biography that has become for many people a substitute for the traditional novel—a book with a hero or heroine, with a beginning, a middle and an end, with startling reversals and revelations. What others do for the rich and famous, Eribon does for the smart and famous. Or at least for the smart and famous of Paris. (Eribon describes almost everything that happened to Foucault as the result of the intervention of some Parisian luminary or other.)

Michel Foucault was born in Poitiers in 1926. He was educated at the École Normale Supérieure and the Sorbonne. His adolescence and early adulthood were unhappy, and he attempted suicide more than once. He drifted in and out of the Communist Party. He worked as an assistant in a psychology laboratory, and taught, in 1952, at the University of Lille. Restless and enervated, in the middle of a love affair with the composer Jean Barraqué, he left for the French Institute at the University of Uppsala in 1955. "I have suffered and still suffer from a lot of things in French social and cultural life. That was why I left France in 1955," he later said. But his wanderings around Europe (he held posts in Warsaw and Hamburg) never took his thoughts away from Paris, which he seems to have both loved and loathed, a point of which Eribon is aware without realizing its significance. Unsure of the direction of his life and his thought, Foucault's state during those early years brings to mind Flaubert's description of Emma Bovary: "She wanted to travel and she wanted to go back to the convent; she wanted to die and she wanted to live in Paris."

In the end, unlike Emma, Foucault reached Paris. In 1960 he received his

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doctorate with his massive *Folie et déraison*, known in English in a badly abridged version as *Madness and Civilization*. He taught at Clermont-Ferrand and became a celebrity in 1966 with the publication of *The Order of Things*, which was a runaway best seller. Unhappy with his book, which detailed the abrupt but systematically connected manner in which natural history, general grammar and the theory of wealth were transformed into biology, philology and political economy in the nineteenth century, Foucault left Paris again. May 1968 found him teaching at the University of Tunis. He kept abreast of the events in Paris by means of a radio which Daniel Defert, the man with whom he shared (though by no means exclusively) the last twenty-five years of his life, held next to the telephone for hours on end.

He returned to Paris later that year and organized the philosophy department at Vincennes. In 1970 he finally attained the goal for which he had campaigned for years: election to the Collège de France, the most prestigious institution of French higher education. Soon thereafter, having abandoned his earlier involvement in the Gaullist effort to reform the university system and his generally apolitical attitude, he joined the radical French opposition. Startling his academic colleagues, Foucault took to the streets. He worked with various Maoist groups; but sometimes his radicalism left even the Maoists speechless.

On one occasion, for example, he argued that popular justice should be dispensed spontaneously, without the mediation of the "popular courts" which the Maoists wanted but which, Foucault retorted, only replicated the bourgeois system that they were intended to dismantle. In a manner naive and frightening, he described the aim of the state apparatus as the education of the masses, so that "it is the masses themselves who come to say, 'In fact we cannot kill this man,' or, 'In fact we must kill him.'" He also organized the Group on Prison Information (GIP), which focused

attention on the horrible conditions inside French prisons. It was at this time that Foucault developed his notion of the "specific intellectual," who addresses particular social problems without relying on a general theory of human nature or history, and usually with the hope only of exposing, not of correcting, a specific wrong.

Through most of the '70s Foucault was the prototype of the engaged intellectual, even coming to blows with the police. *Discipline and Punish*, his history of the modern prison, and one of his bleak-

Yet it was precisely during this time, and not coincidentally, that Foucault altered the direction of his thinking, and revised the project that resulted in his incomplete *History of Sexuality*, a work that marks a real but insufficiently remarked-upon change.

Eribon is not exactly a student of ideas. Though he offers summaries of Foucault's books, he consistently reduces ideas to personalities. He presents Foucault's life as a supremely well-managed quest for academic and popular success. Why Foucault bothered to write

at all remains a mystery. Eribon's book provides a marvelously vivid picture of the Parisian intellectual scene, but no one will learn anything about Foucault's work from it.

III.

Is that a shortcoming in a biography? Why should we expect to understand what Foucault thought better after reading an account of his life? What is the relationship between a philosopher's life and his thought? James Miller's book, which represents an explicit effort to establish deep connections between Foucault's ideas and his personal views on homosexuality, sadomasochism, drugs and death, raises these questions in a spirit of urgency. It is impossible to make a judgment of Miller's controversial book, therefore, without examining, however roughly, Foucault's ideas.

Like Nietzsche and Bataille, Foucault was fascinated by what an individual or a social group must exclude and suppress so that it can form a positive conception of itself. He argued that our conception of what we are like as individuals or "subjects" depends essentially on expelling and controlling whole classes of people who do not fit the categories that the Enlightenment developed in order to establish what it would count as "normal." Foucault believed that the mechanisms used to understand and to control marginalized and ostracized groups were also essential to the understanding and the control—indeed, to the constitu-



MICHEL FOUCAULT BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

est and most influential books, appeared in 1975. He gave a huge number of interviews on his opinions, and he began to speak about his homosexuality and his involvement with sadomasochism. He also began, in 1972, a series of increasingly frequent trips to the United States. For Eribon, America provided Foucault merely with the time and the leisure to prepare his Paris lectures. And though he acknowledges that Foucault "was happy in his work" in America, he insinuates that it was mainly because "he was happy in the pleasures of the flesh." And so "he dreamed aloud of living in the Californian paradise. Sunny, magnificent..."

tion—of “normal” individuals. Thus, the constant surveillance of prisoners that replaced physical torture as a result of penal reform came to be applied also to schoolchildren, to factory workers, to whole populations (and, we might add, to average citizens, whose police records, medical reports and credit ratings are even today becoming more available and more detailed).

Who we are, in Foucault’s account, is a function of such practices. What counts as a “subject,” as what is defined by such information and knowledge, is the result of the exercise of power. In this sense power is “productive,” and is the flip side of knowledge:

Power produces knowledge ... power and knowledge directly imply one another ... there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations.

This is a vision in which everything is paid for. “Ah, reason, seriousness, mastery over the affects, the whole somber thing called reflection, all these prerogatives and showpieces of man,” Nietzsche had written; “how dearly they have been bought! how much blood and cruelty lie at the bottom of all ‘good things’!” Nietzsche did not believe that nothing can ever change for the better. Eventually Foucault came to agree; but from the ‘50s through the ‘70s, partly owing to the influence of Heidegger’s disdain for modernity and partly owing to his political commitments, the anti-humanist Foucault found it impossible to believe that any alteration in what he regarded as an essentially corrupt social and political system could produce any improvement. Power might be exercised in different forms, but its amount and, more importantly, its quality, remained constant. Indeed, as the expression of power came to be cloaked in the vocabulary of humanism and humanitarianism, the condition of oppression actually became worse. For the benevolent appearances of modern power made it that much more difficult to resist.

In his earliest period Foucault examined the “archaeology” of the human sciences—psychiatry, medicine, linguistics, economics and biology (as these two were until recently studied). He investigated the rules underlying and determining their practice, and he showed that these rules often underwent radical shifts (“ruptures”) that could be explained neither by the usual appeals to universal scientific progress nor by the innovations of great individuals. Foucault’s aim was to subvert the objective status of the human

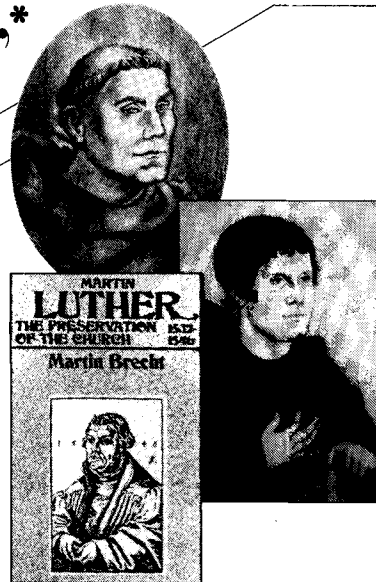
sciences, their claim to arrive at an independent truth, and to expose them instead as a means for the creation and control of the modern “subject.”

His method was exhaustively descriptive. But his point of view created a serious problem for itself. Since history is itself a human science, how could he claim that his own position regarding the human sciences was correct? If his own analysis was true, then the human sciences might be able to reach the truth after all; and if it was false, there seemed no reason to bother with it or to believe it. But this problem, commonly seen as a symptom of Foucault’s “nihilism,” is not without its solution. For Foucault placed

himself within the domain that he was investigating. The issue is not whether there is a general criterion for separating, in all cases, the true from the false, but whether there is a particular theory or interpretation that is better than its alternatives.

This may seem to beg the question. For, one may ask, what are the criteria by which we can determine whether one interpretation is better than another? The answer, again, is that there are no such general criteria. The criteria of evaluation are not immune to dispute, even though it is less likely that people will disagree about general principles than about particular claims of truth or

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falsehood. Foucault offered his own views for evaluation and criticism. His style, it is true, sometimes expressed a hauteur that seemed to forbid discussion. But nothing in the substance of his writing precluded it, and few writers have been as willing to revisit and to rethink their own positions.

More disturbing was the work that Foucault undertook from the late '60s to the late '70s, which coincided with his political activism. These were the years when he shifted his attention from the human sciences themselves to the disciplinary practices of the nineteenth century, and to the direct analysis of the power relations that, he held, traverse everything we do and provide no possibility for escape. The "genealogical" researches of this second period of his writing were his most pessimistic. They were intended to show that everything we take as orderly and rational (the prison, the court system, the school) is the product of domination and subjugation, in short, of power; and that there is no possibility of creating a system from which such domination and subjugation can ever be even partially absent.

His writing and his research again were brilliant; but this was a much more profound form of nihilism. It was crucial to Foucault that power be understood not only as something exercised by a central authority and thus primarily as an agent of prohibition. This, he said, was the "juridical" exercise of power, which is at best a part of what power is and does. More importantly, power is a productive force. It is not exercised by subjects, it creates them. Power is exercised through individuals, but it is not often under those individuals' control. On the contrary, established relationships of power, despite the intentions of those who try to modify them, reassert themselves in constantly changing forms. Efforts to humanize power, to rationalize it, even to renounce it result only in another exercise of power—in the creation of new ways of knowing what individuals or "subjects" are, indeed, of new individuals or "subjects." People who are subject to the sovereign's absolute and total vengeance are essentially different from people whose every movement is observed and catalogued by minor functionaries, who are themselves observed by someone else.

Here is how Foucault put the point in *Discipline and Punish*:

[The] need for punishment without torture was first formulated as a cry from the heart or from an outraged nature. In the worst of murderers, there is one thing, at least, to be respected when one punishes: his "humanity." The day was to come, in the

nineteenth century, when this "man," discovered in the criminal, would become the target of penal intervention, the object that it claimed to correct and transform, the domain of a whole series of "criminological" sciences and strange "penitentiary" practices.

Thus a new form of knowledge and a new form of control went together—which, I believe, is why Foucault refused throughout this period to offer alternatives to the "intolerable" situations that he exposed in his writings and in his political activities. Before such practical hopelessness, even Schopenhauer's metaphysical pessimism seems trifling.

For more than twenty years Foucault seemed dedicated to exposing the seamy underside of the Enlightenment, conceding to it no positive accomplishment and refusing any and all visions of a better future. He explicitly denied that reason can transcend time and accident, and lead us out of the impasse, since reason itself was an instrument, a part of the program, of the Enlightenment. Therefore he rejected the Frankfurt School's less grandiose idea of rationality, according to which the contradictory principles of the Enlightenment could be taken to their logical conclusion and its structure be dismantled from within. Distant and ironic, an anatomist but not a physician, Foucault seemed to withdraw more and more into a solitary philosophical despair.

IV.

And yet matters were not quite so simple. As early as 1960 Michel Serres noticed something important in *Folie et déraison*, when he concluded that "this book is, therefore, also a cry." Foucault's scientific detachment, his forbidding language and his abstract formulations could not hide his own deep feelings for those who have been treated as insane. "At the heart of the meticulous erudition of historical inquiry," Serres wrote,

a deep love circulates ... for this obscure population in which the infinitely close, the other oneself, is recognized.... Consequently, this transparent geometry is the pathetic language of men who undergo the greatest of tortures, that of being cornered, of disgrace, of exile, of quarantine, ostracism and excommunication.

Serres's description is true of everything that Foucault wrote about the disfranchised—about the poor, the delinquent, the prison population, the sexually deviant, factory workers, even children attending the rigorous schools of the nineteenth century. But Foucault's "deep love" seemed to exhaust

itself in letting the voices of these groups be heard. He seemed himself to have nothing to say on their behalf. This was painfully clear in the manifesto that he composed for the Group on Prison Information:

The GIP does not propose to speak in the name of the prisoners in various prisons; it proposes, on the contrary, to provide them with the possibility of speaking themselves and telling what goes on in prisons. The GIP does not have reformist goals; we do not dream of an ideal prison.... [Our] investigations are not intended to ameliorate, alleviate or make an oppressive system more bearable. They are intended to attack it in places where it is called something else—justice, technique, knowledge, objectivity.

Foucault's criticisms of many institutions were devastating. But his unrelieved pessimism provoked vehement objections. How could someone so convinced that so much was so wrong just stand by and proudly refuse to offer any suggestions for improvement? Was this philosophy, or was it the crudest and most cynical form of nihilism? Was Foucault a real and responsible intellectual, or a kind of terrorist cloaked in scholarship?

Then, in the early 1970s, Foucault began a work on the history of sexuality. The first volume in the series, *La volonté de savoir* (translated as *History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*) appeared in 1976. Its central argument was that, contrary to common views, the period between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries did not so much repress sexuality as produce, literally, an explosion of writing about it. He posed the question "not, Why are we repressed? but rather, Why do we say, with so much passion and so much resentment against our most recent past, against our present, and against ourselves, that we are repressed?" Foucault's thesis was that the proliferation of talk about sexuality, especially about the sexuality of children and sexual perversion, brought new aspects of sexuality into existence. Instead of being repressed, sexuality was to a great extent created in the nineteenth century, and with it new capacities for understanding and controlling human beings—in effect, new human beings—came into existence. Once again, he proved himself a master of reversing received pictures.

After writing the introductory volume, Foucault put the project aside. Or rather, he began to think about it in drastically new terms. The next two volumes of his history of sexuality were different from what had been earlier announced, in subject, style and

approach. They appeared eight years later, only a few days before his death. What, then, happened during this period to change the direction of Foucault's project as well as his overall approach to philosophy?

The change was indeed radical. Foucault's unqualified vilification of the Enlightenment was replaced by a serious, if qualified, respect. In a late essay titled, like Kant's, "What is Enlightenment?," he argued that the project of the Enlightenment is still not over. Like Kant, we must engage in constant criticism of ourselves and the world; but unlike Kant, the nature of our criticism must be thoroughly historicist. Our question must be, "In what is given to us as universal, necessary, obligatory, what place is occupied by whatever is singular, contingent and the product of arbitrary constraints?" This, of course, is an old idea of his, but Foucault's discussion ends on a startlingly new note. Our critique, he wrote,

will be genealogical in the sense that it will not deduce from the form of what we are what it is impossible for us to do and to know; but it will separate out, from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibility of no longer being, doing or thinking, what we are, do or think.... It is seeking to give new impetus, as far and wide as possible, to the undefined work of freedom.

"The undefined work of freedom": these are the words of humanism. They represent a stunning reversal for the philosopher who earlier believed that the Enlightenment's reforms were in reality aimed not at the liberation of the spirit, but at a new form of the subjugation of the body, "directed not only at the growth of its skills, nor at the intensification of its subjection, but at the formation of a relation that in the mechanism itself makes it more obedient as it becomes more useful and conversely."

Why the change? My own view is that Foucault's earlier pessimism arose partly from his inability to see for himself to whom the search for alternatives should be addressed. At times he wrote as if there were no such "whom," taking his own "dissolution" of the subject too literally: if individuals are simply the playthings of power, then no effort on their part can produce a change in the continual war of forces beyond conscious control. But he began to see that the situation was more complicated, I believe, partly as a result of his trips to America. This is Miller's argument, too. In the United States the full complexity of Nietzsche's "beyond good and evil" became clear to him. He grasped its dou-

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ble implication: not only that everything good has its bad side, but also that everything bad has its good side. Every virtue, as Nietzsche put it, was once a vice. And from his experience of the sometimes silly, often indulgent self-absorption of California, Foucault rather poignantly arrived at his final, deepest and most important idea, the idea of the care of the self.

The self? Hadn't he himself already eliminated this bourgeois concept? Was he now rejecting all that he stood for? Not quite. Maurice Blanchot had read him rightly:

Were not his principles more complex than his official discourse with its striking formulations led one to think? For example, it is accepted as a certainty that Foucault got rid of, purely and simply, the notion of the subject: no more oeuvre, no more author, no more creative writing. But things are not that simple. The subject does not disappear; rather its excessively determined unity is put in question.

Even though Foucault sometimes wrote as if the self is a fiction, in fact he had never denied that the subject exists. He could not imagine it, however, existing happily; and so he tried to show how different periods constituted subjects differently, and how the subject is not the final ground of thought and history, but their complex product. If the self is not the final reality underlying history, however, it is not exactly a fiction, either; and though it is not ultimately free, it is not exactly a puppet. Moreover, every form of power, in Foucault's new view, contains the possibility of its own undoing, since every prohibition creates "the space of a possible transgression." Since power is productive, the subjects that it produces, being themselves a form of power, can be productive in turn.

That the subject is a construct of history implies that there is no such thing as a "true self," an abiding unity beneath its many appearances. (Christianity had perpetuated the notion of the true self; it required that Christians engage in a "hermeneutics of the self" to see which of their thoughts and desires were really their own, that is, God's, and which were satanic, and foreign to their real nature.) Foucault never abandoned his belief that the true self is a chimera. Instead this belief became the unexpected foundation for his most important idea. He returned yet again to Nietzsche, who had written that "we want to be the poets of our lives." That is to say, Foucault's thinking took a seriously aestheticist turn: "From the idea that the self is not given to us, I think that there is only one practical consequence: we have to create

ourselves as a work of art.... Couldn't everyone's life become a work of art? Why should the lamp or the house be an art object, but not our life?"

This "rediscovery" of the self and the art of living was accompanied by two other important developments. The first was his increasingly public acknowledgment of his homosexuality. He came to believe, as Miller documents, that if movements like gay liberation were to be successful, as he hoped, then he would have to find a way out of his earlier pessimism about the finality of power. The second was his interest in Greek attitudes toward pederasty in particular and pleasure in general, and in the place of these attitudes in the ethical enterprise of the classical and later pagan world, in the ancient understanding of the good person. All these concerns intersect in *The Use of Pleasure* and *The Care of the Self*, the great second and third volumes of *The History of Sexuality*.

In ancient ethical practice, Foucault found a wide range of different techniques, ranging from practical exercises to introspective self-examination to the extensive writing of daily diaries, all aiming to make oneself into a kind of person of which one could be satisfied, even proud. These techniques constituted what he called, following his ancient authorities, "the care of the self." He connected these instruments of morality explicitly to medical thought and practice, and used something approaching the language of therapy regarding them. He became supremely interested in the correct management of pleasure. Was he, then, a belated Freudian? He was not. Unlike Freud, he did not believe in repression; he denied the existence of natural or historically constant needs and pleasures that have been denied by social constraints or individual pathologies. More importantly, he believed that the care of the self, unlike psychoanalysis, was not a process of discovering who one "truly" is, but of inventing, improvising, creating who one can be. Finally, Foucault's model for the care of the self was art.

Thinking under the sign of art seems like quite a departure for Foucault. After all, talk of artistic creation always provokes thoughts of genius, unlimited freedom, absolute spontaneity—the very ideas of which Foucault remained resolutely suspicious throughout his life, before California and after. But finally there is no contradiction. For creativity, too, is always historically situated. Not everything is possible at every time. Like everyone else, artists have to work within the limitations handed down to them by the tradition to which they belong. Cre-

ation involves a rearrangement of the given; innovation always implies a manipulation of the old. And lives, seen aesthetically, are no different: the artistic creation of the self also makes use of the materials with which one is always and already faced.

V.

In Foucault's case, the most important *données* during the last ten years of his life were his erudition and his homosexuality. In particular, he became progressively more fascinated with the sado-masochistic subcultures of New York and San Francisco. Was this an adventitious event, best omitted from an examination of his work, or was it integrally connected with his philosophical development, as Miller insists? And did Foucault succeed in integrating it into the life that he constructed for himself?

The answer is that he did, and we are in Miller's debt for helping us see it. Reversing yet another received view, Foucault argued that the traditional picture, according to which the tolerant Greek attitude toward pederasty was replaced by centuries of Christian repression, was crude, if not totally inaccurate. Austerity was a constant concern and self-control a regular goal from the fourth century B.C. to the third century A.D. But the forms of discipline, the reasons for which it was undertaken and the objects in relation to which it was practiced changed significantly over time, and could therefore be adapted to other situations.

His late research seemed to suggest to Foucault that he might combine ancient ethics (which "was not a question of giving a pattern of behavior for everybody [but] a personal choice for a small elite") with the stuff of his life, and thereby fashion a self of his own. The broad outlines of such a project were limned in his view that Plato's connection between erotic desire and the pursuit of truth opens onto what Foucault called "an aesthetics of existence,"

a way of life whose moral value did not depend either on one's being in conformity with a code of behavior, or on an effort of purification, but on certain formal principles in the use of pleasures, in the way one distributed them, in the limits one observed, in the hierarchy one respected.

Foucault found this aesthetic attitude also in the writings of the Stoics, though his readings of them are problematic.

His last two books were remarkable for his realization that the ancient world was keenly interested in the control of pleasure by means of serious and concerted efforts, by what he rightly called *askesis* or

"asceticism." The purpose of these complex exercises was not to deny the pleasures—of sex, of food, of worldly ambition—but to avoid excess, to become their master and therefore the master of oneself as well. Asceticism is not the repression of pleasure, it is the regulation of pleasure. Its objective is not denial, it is satisfaction. The conventional ascetic ideal of the extirpation of pleasure is not a fact of nature, but the product of centuries of Christian theorizing.

These complicated issues form the core of Miller's troubling biography. Whereas Eribon appeals to the facts of Foucault's institutional behavior, Miller responds, in a philosophical vein, to the paradox of writing the biography of an author who denied the reality of the author by arguing that Foucault was engaged in a lifelong project of fashioning himself as a subject, of creating himself as the author he in fact became. This is not as banal as it sounds. Not all who write are writers, and not all that writers write resonates with their lives. To become an author in Foucault's sense is to be unified and original; to produce nothing less than a new model of how a life can be lived. Foucault applied his own historicism to himself, unifying his life with his thought, and enlarging our understanding of what a "subject" can be, much in the way that great artists enlarge our sense of what art can accomplish.

Miller's controversial book is the product of prodigious research. Unlike Eribon, Miller discusses madness, death and homosexuality, and particularly sadomasochism in great, graphic, almost sensational detail. Though it is philosophically motivated, Miller's book straddles the line between journalism and scholarship, and alternates between scholarly readings and titillating bits of gossip. He does not always succeed in putting all the elements of his subject together. His discussion of Foucault's long-lasting obsession with death left me rather confused because I could not see how it accounts for a very large part of his writing. He tends to quote Foucault too often in explicating his views, and since Foucault himself admitted that "one of my flaws is not being naturally clear," his discussions are sometimes obscure.

Miller's central thesis is that Foucault's life was a continuous effort to put together his literary and philosophical gifts and ideas, his homosexuality and sense of exclusion, his strong political commitments (which distinguished his approach from the hermetic and purely literary aestheticism of Roland Barthes's later works), his dangerously

close relationship with madness, his interest in drugs and his fascination with death into one coherent and aesthetically beautiful whole. This is not just to say that he was lucky enough to die a relatively happy man. I doubt that we can know that, or that it makes any difference. The point is philosophical, not biographical. It is to say that Foucault extended the limits of what could count as an admirable human life, even if it is a life of which many would not approve. But admiration and approval, as Nietzsche might have said, are very different things.

From Miller's account we may conclude that sadomasochism was a kind of blessing in Foucault's life. It provided the occasion to experience relations of power as a source of delight. It was the theater of power in which discipline could bring happiness and domination itself be dominated, partly by submitting to pain voluntarily, partly by controlling its intensity, partly by changing roles. This freedom was unprecedented in Foucault's earlier experience and unwarranted by his earlier thought. Having written about the ways the self has been created in history, mostly through the power exercised on us by others, Foucault undertook to exert power upon himself and, in Nietzsche's words, to "become what he was" on his own. His writing about control and his exercising control on himself became a single project.

Many will be unable to see in Foucault's life anything like the beauty that he hoped they might find. His life and his work may seem to them disgusting and perverse; and Miller's detailed accounts of abject practices will lend support to the caricature of Foucault as a pervert with a highfalutin vocabulary. The book will also upset some of Foucault's supporters, for whom it may seem like an exercise in sexual reductionism, according to which Foucault is thereby himself normalized and neutralized—a gay activist with a highfalutin vocabulary.

But these conclusions about Miller's book are wrong. What is finally so important and so disturbing about Miller's biography is its portrait of a man who was willing to take serious risks with his thought as well as with his life. About the former he asked: "What is philosophy today . . . in what does it consist if not in the endeavor to know how and to what extent it might be possible to think differently, instead of legitimating what is already known?" And he defined "homosexual askesis" as "a way to work on ourselves . . . to invent—I don't mean discover—a way of being that is still improbable."

Foucault's sexual activities were fraught with danger, for himself and others. I refer, of course, to AIDS. It is worth remembering that in the early '80s AIDS was little understood, so it is sanctimonious and hypocritical to attack him today for continuing (as so many others did) to go to the San Francisco bathhouses once the disease had been identified. "Sex is worth dying for," Miller quotes him as saying. This may seem shocking. But it is not the same as saying that sex is worth killing for; nor is it exactly a clear admission of suicidal intention. These are very vexed matters. As Miller concludes, Foucault's behavior "would have involved engaging in potentially suicidal acts of passion with consenting partners, most of them likely to be infected already; deliberately throwing caution to the wind, Foucault and these men were wagering their lives together; that, at least, is how I came to understand what may have happened."

Foucault was not a particularly nice man, though his charm was legendary. What Miller shows is the magnitude of the challenge that Foucault presents to our judgment. He took all that he was faced with, accidents of birth and upbringing, choices made consciously or unconsciously, paths followed by chance or design, features pleasant and unpleasant, appetite and anger, desire and despair, good and evil, and out of them created an oeuvre, a self, an existence that, though it cannot (and probably should not) be followed by others, became, in the strongest terms, a life of his own. There are not many men or women of whom that can be said.

Whatever else Foucault was, he was a great Nietzschean hero. Finally he belonged to a tradition whose loss we are in the habit of lamenting: the tradition of philosophy as a vocation, as an art of living. And no philosopher who has ever belonged to that tradition, including Socrates, who originated it, has been free of the most virulent detractors. In this sense, the appeal to the philosopher's life as well as to the philosopher's work is not only justified, it is necessary. There is no understanding them otherwise, since no clear distinction can be made between the two. Neither the life nor the work is primary; neither can provide a basis on which the other can be understood; and neither can even be understood in itself, since neither is an object in its own right apart from its contribution to the life-work or the work-life, to the whole, of which it is a part.

I can imagine that many of Foucault's followers may be disappointed by his personal, aestheticist turn. They may consider it an abdication of responsibility.

ity, an indulgence for the sake of one man's happiness, an abandonment of politics. But that would be a mistake. In cases such as Socrates, Nietzsche and Foucault, the personal and the public, the aesthetic and the political, are as entangled with one another as the "life" and the "work." It is by effecting transformations in themselves that such thinkers effect the greatest changes in the lives of others, for good or for ill. By turning to the self in his later works, and by living in a manner that was consonant with his ideas, Foucault's "deep love" for the excluded and the marginalized began most powerfully to express itself. He made himself into a model of autonomy, of a voice of one's own. Politics, as he might have put it, begins with the care of the self, which was precisely what Socrates, to whom Foucault devoted his last two lectures at the Collège de France, had been telling his own uncomprehending contemporaries.

Not that this master of suspicion ever

surrendered his extraordinary reserve. "My point," he wrote,

is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad. If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do. So my position leads not to apathy but to a hyper- and pessimistic activism.

These are wise words, the words of a philosopher who showed that he was wise long after he showed that he was intelligent. As much a voluptuary as an ascetic, as much an ascetic as a celebrity, Foucault is proving to be one of the representative figures of our age. His progress from the detached quasi-structuralist of the '60s to the committed and nihilistic intellectual of the '70s to the paradoxical neohumanist of the '80s is a parable of our time. It sets an example even for those who are unwilling to follow him, but who wish, by their own lights, and ultimately like him, to chart a course truly of their own. •

reform should be one of the highest priorities of government in general, and of the new administration in particular. With the right tools, we could save millions, even billions of private and public dollars annually. We could make such savings without any loss in regulatory protection. In a period of economic distress and international competition, moreover, there are few more important tasks. We could use the savings to pay for important social programs. We could even (believe it or not) significantly reduce the deficit. With the right tools, we could also offer better protection to our citizens. We could educate people about risks, thus encouraging inexpensive methods of risk reduction. We could direct our attention to serious risks that Americans face on the job, on the highway, at home and in the air and the water. The government can do much more to protect people from pesticides, from industrial air pollution, from tap-water contamination, from indoor air pollution.

From what I have said so far, it should be clear that risk regulation is a natural area for economists. How should we assess the private and public costs of current risks, and of various strategies for risk reduction? W. Kip Viscusi, an economist at Duke University, is well versed in economic theory, but he is also unusually scrupulous about the facts. His new books are distinguished by an insistent focus on the real world. Viscusi wants to know the actual costs and the actual benefits of different regulatory strategies. He wants to ascertain which strategies have worked, and why.

If we are thinking about protecting American life and health, Viscusi is right to focus our attention on smoking, for the risks here are far higher than for most other environmental hazards. The dangers are well documented: about 300,000 smokers die as a result of their smoking each year. On average, smokers lose ten to fifteen years of life. Smokers have a 10.8 times greater chance than non-smokers of dying from lung cancer; a 6.1 times greater chance of dying of bronchitis or emphysema; a 5.4 times greater chance of dying of cancer of the larynx; a 4.1 times greater chance of dying of oral cancer; and almost double the chance of dying of heart disease. Studies also suggest that people exposed to tobacco smoke ("passive smokers") face a 34 percent greater risk of lung cancer than do non-smokers who are not similarly exposed. This means that passive smoking produces about 2,500 fatal cancers each year—a number that exceeds the number of people killed by all airborne pollutants regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency (with the exception of asbestos).

The core of Viscusi's approach can be

Valuing Life

BY CASS R. SUNSTEIN

Smoking: Making the Risky Decision by W. Kip Viscusi

(Oxford University Press, 184 pp., \$24.95)

Fatal Tradeoffs: Public and Private Responsibilities for Risk by W. Kip Viscusi

(Oxford University Press, 320 pp., \$37)

Let us begin with a few numbers. On a usual day in America, thirty Americans are killed at work, fifty-six are killed at home, and 133 die in car accidents. About 4,000 Americans die each day as a result of cancer. Tobacco smoking contributes to about 30 percent of these deaths. By contrast, occupational hazards help account for about 4 percent of cancer deaths; medicines and medical procedures, for about 1 percent; pollution, for about 2 percent. If we look at government regulations designed to reduce risks to human life, we will find that expenditures range from \$10,000 to more than \$1 billion per life saved. Some health and safety regulations save hundreds or even thousands of lives per year, at low cost. Others save less than one life per year, for a price of millions of dollars. The result is a crazy-

quilt pattern, with a total regulatory bill well over \$200 billion.

If we compare the various risks that we face with the amount that we spend to reduce each of them, we will find it impossible to justify our current system. We do not operate with a clear sense of priorities, and we do not proceed against the most serious problems. To be sure, we are overregulated, but we are also underregulated. Interest groups exercise extraordinary influence over regulatory policy. Regulatory outcomes are often a product of sensationalistic anecdotes rather than a careful investigation of risks. The huge disparities in our laws—some call for absolute protection, others for mandatory technological advances, others for open-ended balancing—cannot produce a sensible system. Often they create chaos and irrationality.

In such circumstances, regulatory

captured very briefly. In considering what government should do about smoking, he argues, we should ask just one question: Are smokers adequately informed of the risks? If people smoke without knowing that it is dangerous, we have a problem; but if they are fully aware, the government has basically done its job. Viscusi's approach leads him to an intriguing empirical investigation of whether people really do know the relevant risks. His striking finding, based on survey evidence, is that people are indeed aware of the risks of smoking. If anything, they believe that the risks are greater than they are. The actual risk that a smoker will get lung cancer because he smokes is somewhere between 5 percent and 10 percent, but people generally think that the risk is 43 percent; even smokers think that the risk is 37 percent.

According to the conventional picture, smokers are fools, addicts or automatons, blindly following glossy advertisements and ignoring information about risk. Viscusi thinks that this picture is all wrong. In the light of his findings, he says that our real goal should be to make sure that the market for risks works well. To this end, government should try to ensure the spread of accurate information about risk, designed to tell people the truth about risks rather than to persuade them to stop smoking. Government should encourage competition in the market for safer cigarettes. It should create a uniform vocabulary containing warnings about differing risk levels for different cigarettes. Finally, it should test cigarettes on its own or develop standards for enabling companies to do so. Through these routes, government can promote an efficient market for smoking—one in which companies compete with one another, smokers are informed, people are free to choose and government avoids paternalism, which is the special bane of economists.

Fatal Tradeoffs generalizes many of the claims in *Smoking*. It is organized into three parts. First, Viscusi tries to figure out how we should value losses of human life. To this end, he explores how much workers "demand" from employers in order to be subject to risks of death and injury. How much is a salary increased for a worker who faces risks? Viscusi concludes that the usual worker receives compensation for a fatality of somewhere between \$1 million and \$2 million, and about \$10,000 for non-fatal injuries. These results are based on actual worker choices to take jobs in risky employment. Outside the labor market, the implicit value for life, calculated by examining the "price premium" for more safety, ranges from \$600,000 (for smoke detector instal-

lation) to \$4 million (for automobile accident risks). Viscusi also offers evidence from surveys in which people are asked about the dollar amounts they would require to face added risk. Here the amounts generally fall within the range of \$3 million per statistical life.

Next, Viscusi tries to understand how people react to risks. His primary claim is that people often perceive risks mistakenly but not randomly. For example, they tend to overestimate the risks of low-probability events (at least if these are highly publicized, such as airplane crashes or nuclear power plant disasters) and to underestimate the risks of high-probability events (such as stroke and heart disease). People also tend to use a "reference point," based on their current conception of risk levels. Even when given new information, they tend to stick close to the reference point, and this can produce big errors. And people show a status quo bias, in the sense that they will require a lot of money to be subject to a risk not present in the status quo, while they will pay relatively little to eliminate an equivalent risk in the status quo. This asymmetry helps to explain the seemingly inexplicable fact that our government regulates new risks—in the environment, the workplace and elsewhere—much more stringently than it regulates existing ones.

Finally, Viscusi looks at the real-world effects of risk regulation. He shows that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, at least in the last two decades, has had a small but significant beneficial effect on workplace injuries. Many lives have been saved. By contrast, there is no clear evidence that the Consumer Product Safety Commission has increased safety for consumers. In a provocative chapter on the Reagan and Bush years, Viscusi concludes that the record was extremely mixed. The first Reagan effort was based on a belief in across-the-board regulatory relief rather than sensible regulatory reform guided by a careful assessment of the real consequences of different approaches. Deregulation became a goal in itself, unaccompanied by a clear understanding of what government should be doing. Viscusi agrees that an important executive order by Reagan that required cost-benefit analysis produced some improvements. Still, Reagan and Bush did not attempt to change the governing law, and they took insufficient steps in the direction of cost efficiency and cost-benefit balancing. Thus we lost the impetus toward meaningful regulatory reform.

In issuing recommendations for the future, Viscusi emphasizes that private markets fail to deal adequately with risks,

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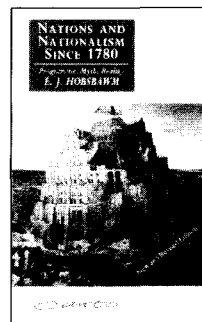
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especially in the area of environmental protection. Laissez-faire is a nonsensical prescription. But regulatory approaches should always be based on a selection of the most cost-effective option. We should base our efforts on a careful balancing of both costs and benefits. Viscusi recommends fundamental legislative reform, which he thinks necessary to achieve the appropriate balancing.

These are careful and informative books. They are filled with interesting ideas and (even better) a wide range of empirical evidence. Viscusi offers much to ponder for anyone interested in environmental protection, consumer safety and workplace risks. Moreover, his prescriptions make a good deal of sense. They could even help form the basis for a bipartisan—even a nonpartisan—effort to reform our laws and our practices and finally come to terms with the pervasive risks to life and health.

And yet there is a basic theoretical weakness in both books. Viscusi's entire

framework is based on neoclassical economics. He does not seriously defend that framework; at times he takes it as self-evident, and seems unaware that it is a framework, requiring a defense against alternatives. (This is an occupational hazard for economists. I doubt that there is any point in regulating against it.) In a nutshell, the framework is this: government should try to reproduce the outcomes of well-functioning economic markets. To be well-functioning, a market requires both adequate information and true competition. If people are perfectly informed about risks, and if they run those risks anyway, government's task is at an end. It must respect the preferences that reveal themselves in private consumption choices. Government should ensure that consumer satisfaction with respect to risks (like consumer satisfaction with respect to everything else) is achieved. It should, like Nabisco or Diet Rite, see consumer satisfaction as its whole raison d'être, its guiding aspiration.

In the area of risk regulation, there are some initial oddities in Viscusi's presentation. Even within his own framework, he underemphasizes both the problem of information and the effects of one person's risks on others. Viscusi's own data on smoking show that many millions of people, smokers and non-smokers alike, continue to underestimate the risks. The fact that, in responding to survey questions, most people seem to have an accurate picture, or even overestimate the risks, does not mean that all is well if many people are insufficiently aware of the dangers. In a world with Medicare and Medicaid, moreover, the illness of any one of us is a bill for many or even most of us. In such a world, one person's decision to run a risk imposes costs on many other people. Certainly we should try to redesign our insurance and welfare programs to create better incentives for people to take care of themselves, but whatever we do, it seems likely that taxpayers will pay for people who need medical assistance.

In the particular context of smoking, there is an important additional consideration, given that passive smoking is a significant source of harm. Even if we accept Viscusi's basic premises, we must use steep excise taxes to ensure that the high social costs of smoking are built into the product's price, and are paid for by the company and the smoker rather than by the rest of us. Viscusi's own evidence shows persuasively that this can be an effective response to smoking and to other risk-creating activity. His treatment of risk regulation devotes too little attention to the possibility that an interventionist system of "risk taxes" or license fees (for high-polluting gasoline, greenhouse gases and much more) could well be justified as a means of stopping people from imposing dangers on the rest of us, or from making the rest of us poorer.

But Viscusi's premises are even more dubious. He seems to think that a democratic system should try only to mimic the outcomes of well-functioning markets. This is an odd conception of democracy, which few serious theorists of democracy have held. Viscusi is entranced with the economic notion of "consumer sovereignty," in which government respects the consumer's willingness to pay for various goods (including risks to life and health), and bases all its policy judgments on that foundation. But the notion of consumer sovereignty is quite distinct from the notion of "sovereignty" as a democratic aspiration. For a democracy, the sovereignty of the people entails respect for the public's deliberative judgments as these have been reached on the basis of a principle of political equality (that is, not merely on the basis of market considerations). It does not entail treating people as consumers with respect to everything of importance, including their lives and their health.

To be less abstract: Viscusi thinks that his empirical evidence shows that the value of a life is somewhere between \$1 million and \$3 million. He thinks that we can prove that workers "value their lives" at a certain amount by seeing how much employers have to pay workers to get them to run certain risks. This is false. Employment decisions usually reflect no considered judgment about the valuation of life. Workers may run a risk, but not because they believe their life is really "worth" \$1 million. They run a risk, rather, because they need a job, and because a job with certain benefits and certain risks is the best job that they can find. For a worker who needs to feed her family, a decision to run a 1 percent risk of fatality in return for \$5,000 does not mean that the worker "really" thinks that her life is worth \$500,000. Perhaps the worker has inadequate information about risk levels; perhaps the worker,

The Frog in the Swimming Pool

A wet green velvet scums the swimming pool,
furring the cracks. The deep end swims
in a hatful of rain, not enough to float

the bedspring barge, the tug of shopping cart.
Green-wet himself, the bullfrog holds his court,
sounding the summons to a life so low

he's yet to lure a mate. Under the lip
of concrete slab he reigns, a rumble of rock,
a flickering of sticky tongue that's licked

at any morsel winging into view.
How would he love her? Let me count the waves
that scrape the underside of night and then

let go, the depth of love unplumbed, the breadth,
the height of the pool all he needs to know.
How do I love him? Let me add the weight

of one hush to another, the mockingbird
at midnight echoing itself, not him,
one silence torn in two, sewn shut again.

Down to his level in time wings everything.
He calls the night down on his unlovely head,
on the slimy skin that breathes the slimy air—

the skin that's shed and still he is the same,
the first voice in the world, the last each night.
His call has failed to fill the empty house

across the street, the vacant swing that sways
halfheartedly, the slide slid into rust,
the old griefs waiting burial by the new.

DEBORA GREGER

even if well informed, is unwilling to think seriously about the fact that she has placed her life in real danger. (This is a far from uncommon human reaction.) It is true that employers must pay more to get people to take risky jobs, and it is even true that some workers trade off health and other benefits, but the typical worker (or consumer) cannot fairly be charged with having reached any judgment on how much her life is worth. For this reason, some of Viscusi's ingenious and rather obsessive arguments about how much people value their lives ultimately appear a bit fantastical, more in the spirit of Jonathan Swift than Adam Smith.

Markets operate against large inequalities in the distribution of wealth, and they are based on the principle of "one dollar, one vote." Democratic politics, by contrast, operates on a principle of political equality, by the idea of "one person, one vote." Hence the outcomes will be very different. Moreover, the results of politics often reflect something other than the economic self-interest that is characteristic of market behavior. Quite apart from inequalities in the distribution of wealth, political behavior at its best involves a process of deliberation and reasoning that should play a large role in our decisions about risks to life and health.

It is wrong, therefore, to think that government's only task is to replicate the performance of well-functioning markets. Of course, life cannot be valued infinitely by those designing environmental regulation. This would be a recipe for irrationality (and national bankruptcy). Of course, politics often contains large distortions of its own. But a democracy has a broader deliberative function. It should be helping to decide what levels of risk people should be facing in different places, not merely taking private preferences as a fixed basis for policy, or treating market choices as if they reveal a context-free judgment about what lives are worth. There is no algorithm or formula to make such a decision for us. Much will depend on the setting in which the risk is run. A voluntary risk is different from one faced involuntarily. It matters, too, whether exposure is an essential part of desirable human activity, whether the risk affects average people, whether alternatives are available and so on.

These criticisms may seem unhappily abstract. But if we put considerations of this sort together with what Viscusi and others have shown about risk regulation, we can begin to discern a concrete and dramatic agenda for government reform. That effort should have five ele-

ments: (1) an open and democratic discussion of the choices at stake in risk regulation; (2) a large-scale shift from "command-and-control" regulation to economic incentives for achieving democratic goals; (3) a new emphasis on receiving and disseminating information, and hence on personal responsibility for risk reduction; (4) a more systematic and long-term set of priorities; and (5) better government institutions.

Most fundamentally, we need to pose and answer some basic questions. In the light of what we know about the risks from the greenhouse effect, what sorts of sacrifices—in the form of increased prices or banned products—are we willing to make? How much should we pay to reduce, say, sulfur dioxide levels by 10 percent? Congress and the president should make these decisions openly. In the past, we have pretended that greater protection has no costs, or yielded to powerful groups on various sides, or blamed some evil person said to be entirely responsible for our problems (the automobile industry, the loggers, the environmentalists). A weighing of the good and bad consequences of government action is an inescapable part of law, environmental or otherwise. This weighing should be done explicitly and publicly.

Democratic goals should be set democratically, not through a mimicry of markets. Still, in trying to achieve democratic goals, we may borrow from the economists and insist that innovative market-based incentives are generally the best strategy. Such incentives could include cash rewards for reducing risk and cash penalties for imposing risk (as in the "green taxes" so popular in Europe but now absent from American environmental policy). Lamentably, Congress has often favored not incentives, but "command-and-control" regulation, in which government selects the particular means for achieving environmental ends. This form of regulation is both ineffective and inefficient. Our government must intervene, at state and national levels; but it should use flexible and inexpensive tools. Our present approaches are wasting literally billions of dollars. By far the better approach is to use economic incentives to encourage environmentally desirable conduct, and to let the market decide on the question of means. A cash penalty for pollution is a wonderful way to stimulate new environmental technologies.

A system of revenue-neutral (or revenue-enhancing and thus deficit-reducing) incentives is surely to be favored on economic grounds. Indeed, the tax system might well be reformed so as to decrease taxes on individuals and corporations while increasing taxes on risk-creating activities. (Europe offers

several examples, such as carbon taxes in Finland and the Netherlands.) Even more important, a system of incentives is much better from the standpoint of democracy. Economic incentives place the right question squarely before the public: How much risk reduction do we want, and at what price? Such a system allows far less room for the interest-group maneuvering that has so often undermined environmental policy. The very generality of the question makes it much harder for government to offer special favors to industry. Whenever government is dictating means, special favors are all too common.

It is also crucial for government to provide and to seek sound information about risks and to encourage a sense of personal responsibility for environmental protection and other forms of risk reduction. Happily, economic incentives tend to create the right reactions on this score. If polluters will have to pay for the harm they cause, we can be assured that all relevant interests will be concerned to find out exactly what that harm is, and to minimize it.

I have suggested the need for a large-scale reallocation in our priorities. Too often our system has been weirdly episodic, producing a "pollutant of the month" syndrome that devotes limited dollars to the wrong problems. We need to know which risks are most severe, and



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we need to address these risks. Current knowledge shows that smoking is by far the most serious cancer threat; we should take steps (including persuasion and steeper excise taxes) to diminish that threat. Excessive and underpriced automobile use is a large source of pollution, of mortality and of millions of serious injuries each year. A stiff gasoline tax, perhaps accompanied by income tax relief for lower- and middle-income taxpayers, would be an appropriate response. At the same time, a new reform strategy would ensure that we cease to devote large resources to relatively small problems. Some EPA and OSHA rules actually spend many hundreds of millions of dollars to save a minuscule number of lives. Our limited public and private funds should be used for more serious problems, such as tap-water contamination, increasing energy efficiency, promoting renewable energy sources and converting from agricultural pesticides to other, safer methods of controlling pests.

And we need new institutions. When it comes to risk regulation, both the legislature and the executive branches are

too fragmented. This fragmentation prevents sensible reform. Congress should create a new "risk oversight" committee, designed to give a clear overview of existing problems, to show what we are getting for the money we spend and to make recommendations for reallocating priorities. Similarly, a highly professionalized institution within the executive branch should be created to compile and disseminate information about risk levels and expenditures, to draw attention to high-priority items and to supervise executive branch decisions in order to ensure coordination and rationality.

These are only a few of the ways in which we might make long-needed changes in the laws and the regulations governing solid waste, hazardous waste, clean air and clean water. The really important fact is that we now have a rare opportunity to promote environmental welfare while promoting economic goals. We must not let it slip away.

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certain sympathies—including the Rothschilds, Moses Gaster, the chief rabbi, and Israel Zangwill, the best-known Anglo-Jewish writer of the day—disputed Weizmann's right to speak on behalf of anyone but himself. He had, of course, no political mandate; for most of his interlocutors, he was an obscure lecturer in chemistry at a provincial university. He did have the support of a small circle of devoted friends in Manchester such as Harry Sacher, Leon Simon, Israel Sieff and Simon Marks (later of Marks and Spencer fame). But only one of them was a public figure of standing, C. P. Scott, the legendary editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, who had good contacts with the leadership of the Liberal Party.

WEIZMANN had met Balfour, the Conservative leader, in 1906, when he explained to him the basic aspirations of Zionism. He had made a deep impression on Balfour, and when they met again in 1914 Balfour (in Weizmann's words) "remembered everything discussed eight years earlier." He said at the end of their meeting that he was deeply moved and interested, and that Zionism was not a dream but a great cause. During the months and years that followed, Weizmann was to proselytize widely among the British establishment—Lloyd George and Milner, Lord Cecil and Smuts, Sir Mark Sykes, Lady Astor and Leopold Amery were some of the new converts.

Weizmann's standing was enhanced by his scientific work, specifically his discoveries concerning the production of acetone, which was of considerable importance for the British war effort. (He also played a key role in the synthetic production of toluene and phenol, then in short supply and badly needed for the production of explosives.) He became adviser to the Admiralty and the Ministry of Munitions. His research probably helped open some doors for him in London, and his discoveries certainly made him financially independent in later life. But the idea that Britain issued the Balfour Declaration and accepted the Mandate for Palestine as a reward for Weizmann's personal services as a scientist is wholly without foundation.

During the first three years of the war, Weizmann's activities in London, political and scientific, were of no practical consequence as far as the Zionist goals were concerned, for the Turks were still ruling Palestine with an iron hand. In fact, prospects for an allied victory (and the collapse of Turkey) were anything but brilliant. Weizmann's work perhaps even endangered the fate of the Jewish community in Palestine such as it was at

The Right Chemistry

BY WALTER LAQUEUR

Chaim Weizmann: The Making of a Statesman by Jehuda Reinharz

(Oxford University Press, 576 pp., \$40)

THIS second massive volume of a massive biography of Chaim Weizmann covers eight years in his life—but what years! It begins with the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 and ends with the ratification of the Mandate for Palestine by the new League of Nations in 1922. At this rate, given that Weizmann continued to be politically active for another thirty years, this huge enterprise still has some 1,700 pages to go. And there's plenty left to fill them: Weizmann subsequently became the president of the World Zionist Organization and the first president of the state of Israel.

Still, a good case can be made for dealing in such detail with his activities during this earlier period, when he occupied no leading official position. This activity was, in retrospect, the crowning achievement of his life. He was not irreplaceable in the '20s and '30s, and certainly not in the '40s, when England had

jettisoned Zionism. But without him there would have been no Balfour Declaration, and without that cornerstone the subsequent growth of Jewish Palestine would not have occurred.

Weizmann fervently believed that England would win the war and would thereafter be the dominant power in the Middle East. Hence his conviction that it was of decisive importance to win over leading British statesmen to the idea of creating something like a Jewish state. He was equally certain that only he, Chaim Weizmann, of Motel, near Pinsk, was capable of accomplishing this task. His assumptions were born out by subsequent events. From the first day of the war, Weizmann, single-minded, determined and utterly sure of himself, mapped out his strategy.

Conditions were not auspicious: Anglo-Jewry was not an important political factor, and its leadership was predominantly anti-Zionist. Those who had

the time. The German (as well as most of the American) Zionists had urged from the beginning of the war that the Zionist movement should be strictly neutral in the great conflict, and for a considerable time it seemed that their course of action was more realistic and responsible than Weizmann's fervent support for Britain. All this changed in late 1917 with the British offensive in Palestine; on November 2 the Balfour Declaration was issued, stating that "His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object." Five weeks later Jerusalem was occupied by British forces.

The story of the Balfour Declaration and the uphill struggle to make it a political reality during the years after has been told before in considerable detail. There was enormous resistance in France and England, in the Vatican, among the Arabs and the British command in the Middle East. Again, Weizmann took the leading role in this diplomatic and propagandistic campaign. During the last two decades some historians have downplayed his role, regarding it as little more than a myth. According to this school of thought, Weizmann was merely a tool in the hands of British policy-makers; he was not the engineer of the short-lived Anglo-Zionist alliance but its epitome. Jehuda Reinharz carefully considers the revisionist arguments but dismisses them as unpersuasive—rightly, I believe. As Sir Charles Webster, a leading British historian who also happened to be an insider in 1917, has written: "Weizmann was the main creator of the National Home.... It was in my opinion the greatest act of diplomatic statesmanship of the First World War."

How did he achieve it? It could be argued that Weizmann was simply a confidence trickster of genius, given that he created the wholly erroneous impression (as Isaiah Berlin has said) that he was a world statesman representing a government in exile, behind which stood a large, coherent, powerful and articulate community. But it is more than unlikely that so many leading politicians would have fallen victim to a con man, however talented, unless they had been convinced that their interlocutor spoke with absolute conviction, and that he offered something with which they were in moral and political agreement.

True, Weizmann was at his best in intimate personal meetings; true, he could be "frighteningly convincing" (as Ronald Storres, a hostile critic, put it). He could

exude enormous charm, and he had an uncanny psychological understanding of and affinity for things British, knowing what arguments to press in a given situation. His charm, as Reinharz notes, worked much less well with leaders of other nations. He was accepted by the greats of the world as an equal perhaps because he made no claims to kinship with them.

When the first volume of this biography was published, it was widely hailed as an outstanding work, and various awards were bestowed on it. The second part is as good as the first. Reinharz has done an enormous amount of research; in a long chapter, he conscientiously follows his hero where most other historians would have feared to tread—onto the highways and byways of the distillation of butyl alcohol, the fermentation of carbohydrates and Holker's bacterium.

Clearly awed by Weizmann's almost single-handed achievement, Reinharz is not unmindful of his weaknesses—his jealousies, his autocratic behavior, his impatience and quickness to take offense. It would be interesting to know whether Weizmann was aware of these weaknesses. My own feeling is that he was not: self-criticism was not among his strengths. But then he made no claims

to sainthood, and even his critics agreed that during this period, at least, his virtues and accomplishments outweighed his blemishes by a great margin.

Was his political judgment ever at fault? One could point to his comments on the Arabs in 1919, which now seem a little naive: Arab agitation (he wrote a friend) "is not serious and deep, but it is there as are the mosquitoes." He thought that the Arabs needed the Jews: "If they do not have us they will fall among sharks." But he also wrote on this occasion that "we must stick to them and deal with them honestly." He firmly thought that the expulsion of Arabs would be unjust and impolitic. Perhaps it was not such a naive judgment after all, at a time when nationalism was limited to a few upper-class Palestinian Arabs and when their total number was 700,000. Weizmann's political judgment began to decline only in later days, as the great Anglophile found it difficult to accept that his beloved England had come to regard its commitment to Palestine as an embarrassment, and that, in any case, Britain's place in the world was no longer what it once had been.

WALTER LAQUEUR's memoir *Thursday's Child Has Far to Go* has just been published by Scribner's.

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Scanners

AS ROGER CLINTON DEPARTS THE MTV ball, record contract in hand, he leaves behind a city with many good bands and very few places for them to play. This has been especially true since the closing last year of d.c. space, a minuscule rock club incongruously nestled amid the blank facades and creepy alleys of downtown Washington. Many of the city's better bands blossomed and burned out there. The staunchly independent local music world revolved around its intimate ground: at a farewell concert, one performer stared out at his audience and said, "I learned how to play guitar on this stage ... so did most of you."

THE SPACE CLOSED SOON AFTER the city warned that spreading groundwaters might flood the building. Ever since, the 9:30 club, located a few blocks away, has put on shows by d.c. space bands. Unfortunately, the dark and cavernous 9:30 is inferior in several respects: music is broadcast over the P.A. as a means of crowd control, not edification; elevated video screens distract attention from the stage, which is hidden in any case behind a forest of columns and bars; and a legion of black-booted bouncers is on hand to save the audience from its own instincts. In other words, it's the perfect rock club for an age of pay-per-view inaugurations.

EVEN IN A CLOSELY MONITORED city like Washington, I have never had much reason to fear for my personal privacy. As far as I know, I've never been investigated or unknowingly intruded upon. And yet, after reading a few recent books, I am somewhat worried about my privacy, or at least the privacy of my "electronic alter ego"—that body of personal data that, I now know, migrates from one computer system to another an average of five times a day. People who worry obsessively about this sort of thing are usually judged to be paranoid, and they often are. But it's hard to defend the existing privacy laws: video rental records are currently protected by legislation, medical records are not. Meanwhile, credit bureaus are quick to disseminate information, and several states have sold height and weight fig-

ures on driver's licenses to clothing retailers.

BEFORE THE CURRENT UPROAR over "data rape," novelists like Thomas Pynchon and Don DeLillo were already studying the circulation of information and paranoia, etching the longing for order against the looming of chaos. Unwittingly echoing DeLillo's fiction, the journalist Erik Larson investigates the business of consumer surveillance, or "behavioral espionage," in *The Naked Consumer*. His most arresting pages detail the development and possible convergence of two devices—the "passive audience meter" and the supermarket scanner. The audience meter not only watches the set, it watches and identifies the viewer as well. (Its monitoring of attention levels recalls the experiments in "pupilmetrics" conducted during the '60s.) Current models

are flawed; they often record the tastes of large dogs and hot water pipes. But Larson expects the passive meter to become a standard feature of the Nielsen household within a few years. Unlike the old Nielsen box, the meter can break down audience preferences by the second. In the future, sneaker ads, sitcom subplots and even individual characters will all receive ratings of their own.

LARSON ALSO THINKS THAT BAR codes like the one on this magazine, when employed to track the buying habits of particular customers, might bring ruin. The Mormon church recently excommunicated several members who had committed the doctrinal error of believing that Universal Product Codes contain Satanic signals. But that isn't Larson's particular concern. In his doomsday scenario, the audience meter and scanner combine to supervise the entire continuum of leisure time. A company called Information Resources is already doing this on a small scale; its "BehaviorScan" program matches the products that participants purchase to the T.V. ads they've seen. The results of such studies are often banal; we now know, for instance, that a Miller drinker is three times more likely to watch "60 Minutes" than a Budweiser drinker. But the aim is to create a total science of consumption, correlating stimuli to sales with laser precision.

LARSON IGNORES OR GLOSSES over much in his alarmist book. There's a big difference, for one thing, between statistical sampling and direct supervision. And complaining about junk mail,

as authors like Larson often do, is no doubt among the most insular and pointless methods of venting middle-class discontent. Larson also implies there is a direct trade-off between privacy and surveillance; the more of one, the less of the other. Sadly, it's not so simple. Take the government's often unwarranted monitoring of computer hackers, many of whom have themselves pioneered new invasions of privacy. Or the proliferation of caller I.D. systems, which screen away unwanted callers but also allow retailers to compile lists of anyone who calls them. And then there's the enclosed atrium, perhaps the quint-

essential urban space of our time because it protects shoppers from the hostile city outside while allowing the most efficient internal policing of the premises. In such a world, one's own security is precisely secured through the surveillance of others.

Ross Perot protested the invasion of his home while advocating the occupation and house-to-house search of entire neighborhoods. He was on to something.

THE RECORDING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION of America recently sponsored the inauguration's "Rock The Vote" ball. Its selfless commitment to democracy and art was perhaps better illustrated by one of Congress's less publicized embarrassments this fall: the passage of the Audio Home Recording Act in October. The bill is essentially a private tax. It imposes a surcharge on the sale of digital recording devices and blank cassettes and disks; the revenue generated will be distributed to record companies, performers, music publishers and songwriters. The law allows a new generation of digital recording systems to enter the market but also represents the final success of the record industry's long campaign to introduce a special tax on home taping. For years, record companies have argued that such a tax was necessary in order to compensate musicians for lost royalties. (Electronics manufacturers and consumer groups disagreed.) But now the tax has been levied, the real motive is clearer. According to *Billboard* magazine, record companies, having passed the law for the sake of art, are now scheming to deprive artists of the direct royalties mandated by the law. The president of the RIAA has threatened "pushing and shoving" to snag more of the windfall. Bill Clinton's honeymoon isn't the only one that's over. Roger Clinton's may be also.

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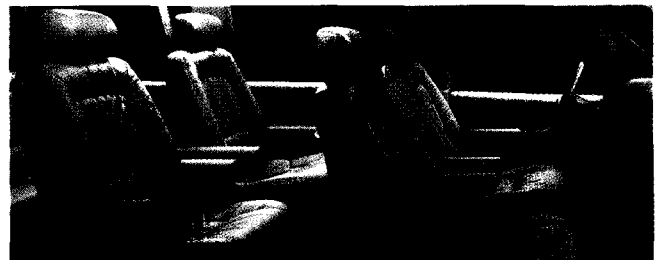
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